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The Impact of Mentorship on Women Superintendents in Minnesota

by

Amy Beth Denneson

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Dissertation Committee:
Dr. John Eller, Chairperson
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Abstract

Background

Historically, women have held the majority of positions within the field of teaching; however, they have been and continue to be disproportionately represented in educational administration, especially the superintendency (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Young found "it appears that while the leadership characteristics commonly associated with the female gender are becoming more accepted and valued, the actual gender is not" (as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 5). "The absence of women... means that women's influence on policy changes, decisions, and practice in the field is limited" (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 486). A "research-based understanding of this inequitable situation from the perspectives of the relatively few women who inhabit this role is needed" (Skrla, Reyes, and Scheurich, 2000, p. 46).

Problem

Mentorship [was] commonly cited in the research as one of the most effective supports available to women in attaining the superintendency. Research has shown that women more actively use mentoring systems than men in their career paths, but the effectiveness of their mentoring practices is unclear.

Purpose

The purpose of this study [was] to gather information from practicing female superintendents in Minnesota about the extent to which they were mentored and the mentor qualities they perceived as most effective. This study was quantitative in nature and designed to answer four research questions: (1) How extensive is mentoring among women superintendents in Minnesota? (2) How do women superintendents in Minnesota describe their experiences with mentoring? (3) What do women superintendents in Minnesota perceive to be important elements of an effective formal and informal mentoring program? (4) What recommendations do women superintendents in Minnesota have for developing effective mentoring programs?

Findings

Survey findings provide a wealth of information about how to develop more effective mentoring programs for women superintendents in Minnesota. Better mentoring programs will help attract administrators to the superintendency, support job retention, and create a network of more effective school superintendents. "Professional networking offers a system for women to enhance their career opportunities..." and given the limited networking opportunities currently available for women, "...it becomes the responsibility of professional organizations to work in partnership with higher education to ensure these opportunities for women exist" (Raskin, Haar, & Robicheau, 2010, p. 164).

Key Search Words: Superintendent, Superintendency, Mentorship, Mentor, Women, Woman, Female, Minnesota, Education, Inequity, Equity, Gender, Roles, Education Administration, Leader, Leadership, Dissertation, Research

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my amazing family—Travis, William, and Andrew. I feel so blessed to have had your unconditional love and unwavering support on this journey and always!

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Historically, women have held the majority of positions within the field of teaching; however, they have been and continue to be disproportionately represented in educational administration, especially the superintendency (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Glass and Franceschini (2007) conducted the Mid-Decade Study of the American School Superintendency in 2006 and found that 21.7% of superintendents were women. This percentage is strikingly low when compared with the 72% of American teachers that they found to be women (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). This incongruence led Glass (1992) to describe the superintendency as “the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the country” (p. 8).

An examination of the evolution of the superintendency, from its inception in the early 19th century to present day, grounded contextually in American history, provided insight to the glaringly low numbers of women in the superintendency. Two distinct epochs were revealed when women’s representation in the superintendency showed signs of burgeoning; however, neither of these periods resulted in significantly lessening the discrepancy between the large number of female teachers and the small number of female superintendents. Women have consistently remained the majority in the field of teaching and the minority in educational administration (Brunner & Grogan, 2007, Blount, 1999; Glass, 2000).

The review of research demonstrated that women who seek the superintendency face barriers. Shakeshaft (1987) identified two types of barriers: external and internal. External barriers are “those over which the individual does not have control since their roots are embedded in our organizations and our society” (Criswell & Betz, 1995, p. 28). External barriers women face include: persisting stereotypes and gender bias, past practices that disadvantage women, biased selection processes, unrealistic performance expectations, and a lack of support

systems (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Criswell & Betz, 1995; Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Ortiz, 1982; Tallerico, 2000).

A lack of support systems in general, and specifically networking systems and positive role models, is problematic to women aspiring to be school superintendents (Gupton & Slick, 1995, p. 11). In Minnesota, prominent professional organizations for educational leaders include, but are not limited to: the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association. Each provide general professional development opportunities for school administrators, but none that are gender specific. Two more recent ancillary supports, Ruth's Table and the Symposium of Women Educational Leaders, have developed to provide networking opportunities specifically for women.

Internal barriers are those that "are related to how women perceive themselves and their roles" (Criswell & Betz, 1995, p. 28). Internal barriers that may prevent women from pursuing the superintendency include: a lack of confidence in abilities, low aspirations for advancement, lack of credentials, personal and family conflict, and a reticence to address gender issues (Criswell & Betz, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1987).

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 34). Smythe (2004) described the conceptual framework as the tool that researchers use to build ideas and theories that will guide them to identify the problem, frame appropriate research questions, and guide selection of suitable literature. "In constructing a conceptual framework, your purpose is not only descriptive, but also critical; you need to understand (and clearly communicate in your proposal)

what problems (including ethical problems) there have been with previous research and theory, what contradictions or holes you have found in existing views, and how your study can make an original contribution to our understanding” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 35). Maxwell (2005) further explained that a conceptual framework is not something that is identified in existing literature, but rather constructed by the researcher as the result of what was found in the literature.

The conceptual framework for this study resulted from the discovered underrepresentation of women in the school superintendency. A review of the research revealed that while significant attention has been given to barriers that deter women from the superintendency, less research exists that deeply examines specific supports and the role those supports play/ed for women who have successfully attained the superintendency. In the research that has been conducted, mentorship has been clearly identified an effective support for women in the superintendency. Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young & Ellerson (2010) found that "Superintendents often mentored colleagues aspiring to be administrators and especially those aspiring to be superintendents. About 83% of all respondents reported that they have been mentored, and percentages for males and females serving in this role were virtually identical" (Kowalski et al., 2010, p. xvii).

Statement of the Problem

Little information was found about the role that mentoring experiences played for women superintendents in Minnesota. Maxwell (2005) explained that "your research problem functions (in combination with your goals) to justify your study, to show people why your research is important (p. 34)." Brunner and Kim (2010) found that women actively use mentoring programs, but questioned the quality of mentors available, the mentorship provided, and women’s abilities to effectively utilize mentoring experiences for career advancement. Though mentorship has

been established as an effective professional support, little information was found about the qualities that female superintendents felt were crucial in effective mentoring programs, either formal or informal.

Purpose of the Study

The research was designed to provide insight into the impact of mentorship on women in the superintendency in Minnesota. It was also designed to furnish useful information to school districts and professional organizations about how to better utilize mentoring to support women who aspire to the superintendency. The quantitative data that was gathered described the experiences female superintendents in Minnesota have had with mentoring and their perceptions about the effectiveness of those experiences.

The study adds to the current body of knowledge by providing information about the role that mentorship has played for women superintendents in Minnesota. Data were gathered through an online survey that was sent to the 53 female superintendents in Minnesota who are also members of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators. The survey elicited information about participant experiences with mentoring and the elements they perceived to be important in effective mentoring programs, formal or informal.

Assumptions of the Study

The study was predicated on several assumptions. The first was that the superintendency is considered the pinnacle of K-12 educational administration. This assumption was made based on the placement of the superintendent at the apex of most school system's organizational charts, and similarly, the compensation a superintendent receives compared to other administrators in the same school system.

A second assumption was that current employment as superintendent is sufficient to deem an individual likely to possess valuable insight to offer regarding effective leadership. Women in Minnesota who hold the position of superintendent and are an active member of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators were invited to participate in the study.

A third assumption inherent in this method of data collection was that respondents answered honestly. Responses were analyzed as truthful representations of respondents' experiences and perceptions.

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study were as follows:

- The study was limited to female superintendents in Minnesota who are members of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators.
- Participants for the survey were identified using a 2015-2016 membership list from Minnesota Association of School Administrators. Female superintendents who were not members of this professional organizations were not invited to participate in the study and thus not represented in the survey results.
- The sample size for the quantitative portion of the survey was small; results may not be transferrable to other populations of superintendents, including female superintendents in states other than Minnesota.

Research Questions

Survey and interview responses provided insights into the experiences that female superintendents in Minnesota have had with mentoring, and allowed for the identification of qualities that effective mentors possess. The questions that guided the research included:

1. How extensive is mentoring among women superintendents in Minnesota?

2. How do women superintendents in Minnesota describe their experiences with mentoring?
3. What do women superintendents in Minnesota perceive to be important elements of an effective formal and informal mentoring program?
4. What recommendations do women superintendents in Minnesota have for developing effective mentoring programs?

Definition of the Terms

External barrier: Barriers over which the individual does not have control since their roots are embedded in our organizations and our society (Criswell & Betz, 1995, p. 28).

Gender queue: When a position is filled according to gender bias, where males hold the highest end of the hierarchical ordering and women the lowest (Tallerico & Blount, 2004, p. 635).

Ideal worker: One whose uninterrupted presence can be guaranteed on a daily basis and one who is immune from family responsibilities (Bailyn & Williams, 2000).

Internal barrier: Barriers that are related to how women perceive themselves and their roles (Criswell & Betz, 1995, p. 28).

Mentor: An individual who teaches, coaches, advises, trains, directs, protects, sponsors, guides and leads another individual or individuals less experienced (Brunner, 2000; Grogan, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1987).

Sponsorship: A proactive practice that involves serving as an advocate for someone in all appropriate areas (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006, p. 185).

Sponsor: A well-known person, an established woman or man, who relates effectively to other leaders who have major decision-making responsibilities that include employment and promotion (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006, p. 185).

Glass ceiling: A barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up the management hierarchy (as cited in Cleveland, Stockdale & Murphy, 2000, p. 312).

Feminist perspective: A feminist perspective is one that recognizes that there are social inequalities which rest on gender differences (Grogan, 1996, p. 21).

Summary

Chapter Two will provide a review of the body of academic literature pertaining to women and the school superintendency. The literature review is organized into three sections: a history of the superintendency, barriers to gender equity in the school superintendency, and practices to work toward gender equity. The review of literature reveals that little information exists about the experiences female superintendents in Minnesota have had with mentoring.

Chapter Three explains the study methods used to gather information from women superintendents in the state of Minnesota about their experiences with mentoring and their perceptions of its effectiveness in their subsequent practices as superintendent. Study participants will also be asked to recommend practices for inclusion in effective mentoring programs. The research methods will be discussed at length in Chapter Three. Chapters Four and Five will discuss and analyze the results of the study.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History of the Superintendency

Just as the superintendency has changed over time, so too has the representation of women in the superintendency. A close study illustrated that women's access to the superintendency increased when men were not able to, or did not desire to, fill the position. Conversely, the superintendency was not available to women when men sought the position.

The rise of women superintendents. The early 19th century was a time of commercial and industrial growth in United States' cities (Candoli, 1995, p. 335). The number of city schools increased to meet the needs of the expanding population. Schools no longer operated in geographic isolation and a need for systemic oversight developed. The first superintendent of common schools was appointed in Buffalo, New York on June 9, 1837 and the first superintendent of public schools on July 31, 1837 in Louisville, KY (Candoli, 1995, p. 335).

The first opportunity for women to significantly enter the field of education was when men abdicated teaching positions to fight in the American Civil War. Women responded by filling the teaching vacancies (Blount, 1999, p. 5). Women entered the profession at such high levels that, by the time the men returned, teaching was no longer viewed as a man's profession and men sought positions outside of education.

The paradigm shift from viewing education as a male occupation to a female one soon extended beyond teaching and into educational administration. "With fewer male educators who could be promoted into county superintendencies, more female educators who might aspire to the positions, and a large social movement that promoted political enfranchisement and power of women, conditions around the turn-of-the-century were ripe for women to move into formal

school leadership positions” (Blount, 1999, p. 5). The number of school superintendents nationwide was growing and women filled the positions.

According to Candoli (1995), two events led to development of the superintendency nationwide. The first was the Michigan Supreme Court’s decision in 1874 to allow local school boards to collect taxes for secondary schools; which increased the number of high schools and necessitated a position to oversee the needs of elementary and secondary schools (Candoli, 1995, p. 335). The second event was the introduction of motorized transportation that allowed for greater movement of students between district schools and the ability to offer specialized services more efficiently and effectively (Candoli, 1995, p. 335).

The late 19th and early 20th centuries have been called the “Golden Age” for women in educational administration due to the success women experienced in attaining the superintendency and other administrative positions in education during this time (Blount, 1999, p. 5). Blount (1999) reported that the number of female county superintendents grew from 228 in 1896 to 495 in 1913 (as cited in the Report of the Commissioner of Education) and leapt to 862 in 1930 (according to the Women Suffrage Yearbook). Thomas Woody postulated that "everywhere they [women] were demonstrating their capacity as teachers; and, in some places they were becoming superintendents and principals of schools. Because of their prominence in this, their first great public profession, it came to be generally recognized that they should have a voice in the control of school affairs" (as cited in Blount, 1998, p. 11). During the 1915 National Education Association (NEA) meeting in Oakland, California, a group of women administrators gathered to form the National Council of Administrative Women in Education; which was the first professional organization for female school administrators (Brunner, 1999, p. 21).

The “Golden Age” for women in the superintendency coincided closely with the women’s rights and women’s suffrage movements. Women’s success in the profession of education, including administration, was heralded as a predictor for future equality. "As women won increasing numbers of county superintendencies, several state superintendencies, and a few city executive positions, women's rights activists lauded these victories as harbingers of women's eventual equal rights" (Brunner, 1999, p. 16). “Since women superintendencies were among the first public positions for which women were eligible, the strengthening suffrage movement effectively translated into votes for women superintendents" (Brunner, 1999, p. 17).

Women’s advancements in educational administration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were not viewed by all of American society as “golden.” In 1880, Charles Francis Adams Jr., descendant of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams, was invited to address the NEA and provide his thoughts on the school superintendency. Adams encouraged the establishment of professional preparation programs to legitimize the executive nature of the superintendency and exclude women. Though many preparation programs during this time were accepting women, "Adams urged his male audience of superintendents to take their guidance from universities, nearly all of which excluded or severely limited women's enrollment at the time" (Blount, 1998, p. 40).

In addition to requiring professional training for superintendents as a means of limiting women’s access to the superintendency, opponents lobbied for the county superintendency to move from an elected position to an appointed position, just as the city superintendency had done. In 1909, forty percent of county superintendencies, an elected position, were held by women; all 33 city superintendencies, an appointed position, were filled by men (Brunner, 1999, p. 23). Opponents to women in the school superintendency utilized media to persuade the

American people to make the position an appointed one rather than an elected position. A contemporary newspaper, the Fresno Republican, ran an editorial that staunchly argued: "if there is any public place that ought not to be elective, it is that of any sort of school superintendent" (Brunner, 1999, p.23).

The fall of women superintendents. Women's access to the superintendency grew precarious through the 1920s, but the return of American male veterans after World War II brought an abrupt halt to the "Golden Age" of women in the superintendency and the number of women who held administrative roles fell sharply. Veterans returning from war flooded the American workforce—but many were reluctant to accept positions in teaching because it was viewed as a woman's field, according to Blount (1999). School districts responded by recruiting veterans to "the toils of the classroom with the promise that they would receive rapid promotion to school administration" (Blount, 1999, p.7).

One way that the path to school administration was expedited for veterans was through implementation of requirements that educational administrators complete graduate-level credentialing programs (Blount, 1999). The G. I. Bill was signed into law in 1944 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and provided veterans with easy access to credentialing programs. In fact, according to a 1971 survey conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), nearly seventy percent of superintendents surveyed [in 1971] had taken advantage of the G. I. Bill to complete their studies (Knezevich, 1971, pp. 25-27).

Mandates prohibited women from acquiring the new credentialing needed for the superintendency. American society "witnessed a revival of the prejudices against women that had hindered their advancement into administration from the colonial period onward" (Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 48). The reemergence of biases against women in the 1940s led to two

decades of significant decline in the number of women in the superintendency. According to Blount (1999, p.13), the number of county superintendents who were women fell from 718 in 1950 to 366 in 1970.

Another way that school administration was made more appealing to men during the decades following World War II, was a marked increase in the status and compensation of administrators, especially superintendents. Salaries for superintendents were increased through consolidation of smaller districts into larger districts with a broader tax base (Blount, 1999, p. 8). The school superintendency now possessed the credentials, status, power, and compensation commensurate with an executive leadership position.

Evolution of the superintendent role. According to Candoli (1995), the superintendent's role evolved from that of a scientific manager in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to a human relations approach in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Hawthorne studies conducted during this time established a "defensible base for valuing the human relations skills of the superintendent" (Candoli, 1995, p. 338). The human relations approach to the superintendency transitioned to a behavioral approach in the 1950s; which was built around the belief that "by studying models created, for example through the analysis of established facts and the projection of possible actions to be taken, the theorist can resolve issues that might otherwise cripple the organization" (Candoli, 1995, p. 339). The civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s ushered another evolution in the role of the superintendent, as people became more involved in political decisions and no longer accepted the "superintendent's traditional role of 'expert'" (Glass as quoted in Candoli, 1995, p. 340).

President Richard Nixon signed the Education Amendments, including Title IX, into law in 1972; which prohibited discrimination based on gender. Two years later, the Women's

Educational Act designated funds to research and correct sex-based inequalities in the American educational system (Grogan, 1996). In turn, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) published "Selecting a Superintendent" in 1979 to address these mandates, especially Title IX (Grogan, 1996, p. 14). According to Grogan (1996), the attention given to gender neutrality in the publication was driven more by legal considerations than a concerted effort to revision the position, but the number of female superintendents began to rise none the less. Blount (2004) reported that the number of female superintendents rose to 633 in 1990 and to 1,245 in 1998.

While these numbers demonstrate growth in the actual number of female superintendents, they are misleading. The ratio of women serving as superintendents did not increase. In 1952, the percentage of American school superintendents who were women was 6.7 percent. In 1992, forty years later, that number remained virtually unchanged at 6.6 percent (Skrla, Reyes & Scheurich, 2000, p. 45) after rising from a low in 1982 when only 1.2% of superintendents were women (Kowalski et al., 2010, p. 17).

The superintendent role today. Today, 24% of school superintendents are women; which demonstrates that the number of women serving as superintendents continues to lag behind that of men. Bjork and Keedy (2001) declared "the superintendency (the chief executive officer of our over 14,000 local school districts) the most male-dominated executive position of any profession" (as cited in Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 486). Munoz, Pankake, Murakami, Mills and Simonsson (2014) predicted that "it will take over an additional 30 years for women to achieve equitable numbers in the superintendency with their male counterparts and achieve earnings comparable with these same men, nationwide" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 764).

The role of the school superintendent is more complex today than ever. Today's superintendent is expected to fulfill duties and responsibilities in three critical areas: "(1) a wide range of managerial duties, (2) instructional leadership responsibilities, and (3) analytical tasks (e.g., planning and making policy)" (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 185). The complexity of these expectations contrasts starkly to the earlier, more singular, expectations of a superintendent. The contemporary superintendent is not only expected to fulfill multiple, diverse roles, but "she or he is expected to know when to transition among the roles" (Kowalski et al., 2010, p. 5).

"Considering the changes that have transpired during the past three or four decades in American society and in American schools, a modified role for the modern superintendent might be that of consensus builder, of planner, of communicator, and of visionary for the school system as well as that of competent manager" (Candoli, 1995, p. 345).

"Studies conducted throughout the United States indicate there is a shortage of educators applying for administrative positions, especially the principalship and superintendency" (Buell, Schroth & DeFelice, 2002, 182). In 2004, Catherine Marshall predicted that the field of school leadership would be repopulated by 2010, leaving many vacancies to be filled (as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 2). According to the 2015 Study of the American Superintendent, nearly one-third of superintendents plan to retire in the next five years (Finnan, McCord, Stream, Mattocks, Petersen and Ellerson, 2015). "Tapping into all of the human resources available to fill these positions and drawing on the strengths of each would add to the candidate pool and aid in filling these vital positions with qualified candidates" (Buell, Schroth & DeFelice, 2002, p. 181).

External Barriers to Gender Equity in the School Superintendency

The literature reviewed demonstrated that women who seek the superintendency face numerous external and internal barriers (Irby & Brown, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1987). External

barriers are defined as “those over which the individual does not have control since their roots are embedded in our organizations and our society” (Criswell & Betz, 1995, p. 28). Internal barriers are those that “are related to how women perceive themselves and their roles” (Criswell & Betz, 1995, p. 28). An examination of external and internal barriers provides insights into why there are fewer female superintendents than male superintendents.

Persisting stereotypes and gender bias. Research showed there are several reasons for the persisting stereotype that a man is best suited for the superintendency. Men are often seen as possessing more innate power than women. A study conducted by Irby and Brown (1995) revealed that “by both men and women, men were perceived to have legitimate or automatic power or authority based on their gender, while women were perceived to have to earn authority through the passage of time and a hard work ethic” (Irby & Brown, 1995, p. 6). Fletcher (2004) expounded on the qualities that are stereotypically associated with women; “women are thought to be communal - friendly, unselfish, caretaking - and thus lacking in the qualities required for success in leadership roles” (Ely, Ibarra & Kolb, 2011, p. 477). Women who want to succeed need to “monitor their femininity” (Smulyan, 2000, p. 600).

The superintendency remains a male-centered position where "warrior, military, or business mentality" predominates (Tallerico, 2000, p. 92). "Access to and the use of power are more consistent with male sex-role stereotypes, which emphasize dominance and achievement, than with female sex-role stereotypes, which emphasize helping and cooperation" (Cleveland et al., 2000, p. 144). As those in power, men are often seen as strong, protective, objective, just, independent, visionary, and fatherly, while women are viewed as passive, fragile, weak, subjective, vulnerable, yielding, needy, and an emotional liability (Grogan, 1996; Marshall, 1981; Skrla, 2003). "The male/female dualism which is pervasive throughout educational

administration produces the binary opposition of superintendent/woman in the stereotypical construction of both terms" (Grogan, 1996, p. 182).

Some female administrators consciously distance themselves from groups, behaviors, and philosophies that are considered feminine. "Marshall (1985) found that 'disidentifying with women' (p. 132) was one of several ways that female school administrators manage impressions of their 'stigma' (p. 146) in a male-dominated field" (Tallerico, 2000, p. 101). "An existing and pervasive stereotype in the field is that successful leaders must portray masculine characteristics and corresponding styles, which are often a mismatch for females" (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 4). Women seeking the superintendency may relinquish traits deemed as feminine in lieu of more masculine traits in an attempt to gain status (Herber, 2002, p. 137). Many times this does not achieve the desired result. Researchers have found that women leaders who abdicate their feminine gender role are evaluated less favorably than women who act within their expected role (ibid). The often masculine nature of the leadership culture can marginalize and isolate women (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 3).

Historically males have filled the position of the school superintendency. As such, the general public often views the district superintendency as a male position and females in the superintendency are an exception (Munoz et al., 2014; Skrla, 2003). This results in a cycle where "people see men as better fit for leadership roles partly because the paths to such roles were designed with men in mind. The belief that men are a better fit propels more men into leadership roles, which in turn reinforces the perception that men are a better fit, leaving gendered practices in place" (Ely et al., 2011, p. 478). The fact that women are not leading districts in great numbers causes an uneven balance between male and female leadership styles (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 766).

Research suggests that people may not be conscious of their gender biases. Banks (1995) argued that "there are powerful (although largely invisible) influences within the educational system, the administrative profession, and society that reflect and reinforce long-standing traditions of Caucasian male leadership of American institutions (as cited in Tallerico, 2000, p. 84). Even people who strive to make objective decisions are likely to advantage people who are most like themselves (Tallerico, 2000, p. 105). Calas and Smircich (2009) described these invisible barriers to women's advancement as "second-generation" gender bias. They found that second generation gender bias can greatly impact "workplace structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favor men" (as cited in Ely et al., 2011, p. 475).

Gender bias also exists in executive positions outside the field of education. According to Catalyst's 2011 US Women in Business report, women constituted only 2.2% of Fortune 500 CEOs (Ely et al., 2011). Irby and Brown (1995a) conducted a survey of 120 executives that included 60 male (business and education) and 60 female (business and education) to determine how perceptions of effective leadership were impacted by gender. They found that "men talked about the origin and the influence of their personal leadership style being based upon their job experiences, their own personal vision, and their innate abilities. Women were more influenced by role models, mentors, and formal training" (Irby & Brown, 1995a, p. 8).

Traditional career ladder. Research shows that women climb the career ladder more slowly than men, often exhibit less desire for administrative positions, and have more difficulty accessing administrative positions when they are interested. Andruskiw (1989) indicates that men move more quickly up the administrative ladder, gain a wider array of administrative skills in a shorter period of time, have fewer career interruptions, and are not necessarily required to prove themselves as they are often promoted for their potential rather than for their

accomplishments” (cited in Hall & Klotz, 2001, p. 22). “While 80.6 percent of men superintendents entered their first administrative positions before 36 years of age, only 50 percent of women superintendents and administrators aspiring to the superintendency were in their first administrative roles before the age of 36 years” (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 293). Evans (1998) argued that “women are promoted based on their performance, while men are often promoted on their perceived potential” (as cited in Munoz et al., 2014, p. 768). “Women in education face this discrimination in the form of glass ceilings in contrast to glass escalators, shorter job ladders, and stunted career paths” (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 484).

According to the 2015 Study of American Superintendents, the majority of superintendents' career paths followed the traditional pattern of moving from teacher to site administrator to assistant superintendent to superintendent. The traditional career path to the superintendency advantages men. "Relatively fewer women superintendents (20.6%) move directly to the superintendency from a principal's role than do men superintendents (32.8%)" (Glass et al., 2007, p. 26). Men and women interested in the superintendency need experiences to prepare them for the position and the best preparation is to serve as assistant superintendent or principal (Grogan, 1996, p. 66). According to Glass (2000), nearly all superintendents have previous experience as principals and/or assistant principals, and approximately 70% of superintendents come from secondary school backgrounds (Glass, 2000, p. 26). “In comparison to the elementary principalship, the high school role is viewed as more complex and is characterized by more visible pressures and more difficult problems” (Tallerico, 2000, p. 79). The tasks and responsibilities of a high school principal are considered more commensurate to those of the superintendency.

Nearly 75% of elementary teachers are women; however careers in elementary education do not afford the same advancement opportunities available in secondary education, such as positions as department chair or assistant principal (Glass, 2000). This means that there are fewer opportunities to gain the administrative experience necessary for the superintendency at the elementary level where women are most prominent. "Women are over-represented in the education system; yet, they are consigned to lower positions" (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 3). "Most career paths have clearly delineated paths that you can research and then follow" (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, p. 33). In education, women often move into administrative positions that are considered staff, rather than line positions (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 291). "Line, not staff, positions are the conduits to senior management... [therefore] the perception of 'women as staff' can hinder your mobility" (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, pp. 180-184). "Therefore, while the staff school leadership positions women tend to hold seem to work well with the demands of their personal lives, in the eyes of those who hire school administrators, these positions do little to prove candidacy for upper-level positions" (Hume, 2015, pp. 20-21).

Ideal worker. The current market system favors workers who are able to conform to the notion of an ideal worker. An ideal employee is one whose career progress in the market is linear and uninterrupted by family or personal circumstances (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 492). The American Association of School Administrators' (AASA) ten-year studies consistently show that women superintendents are older than their male counterparts with comparable years in the superintendency (Glass, 2000). There are many reasons to explain this phenomenon. Women superintendents may be older because their career paths are less direct and they climb the ladder more slowly than men. Women tend to miss key promotion stages in the labor market that generally occur early in the career path and at a time when many people may plan to have, or

are already having, children (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 494). "If women are older than men when they apply for their first superintendency, then overt or subtle age discrimination will affect them more significantly" (Tallerico, 2000, pp. 77-78).

Though education is typically considered a family-friendly profession, women's advancement in the administrative ranks looks similar to fields that are considered male-dominant, including business and law (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 486). "Access [for women] within the occupation does not lead to proportional advancement" (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 486). Skrla (2007) found that the odds of a man teacher becoming superintendent is approximately one in 40; whereas, the odds of a woman teacher becoming superintendent is one in 900. Stated another way, a man is twenty times more likely than a woman is, to become a superintendent. "Discrimination occurs because the organization is structured such that women are systematically disadvantaged in comparison to men in their efforts to navigate their careers to top executive levels" (Cleveland et al., 2000, p. 313).

Gender queues. A gender queue occurs when a position is filled according to gender bias, where males hold the highest end of the hierarchical ordering and women at the lowest (Tallerico & Blount, 2004, p. 635). Research on women's advancement in previously male-dominated work roles indicated that the sources of opportunities for women in historically male fields correlated greatly to when men left the field. There were "significant increases in job vacancies (due to occupational growth, turnover, incumbent exits, wars, major technological change, and the like) and/or the deterioration of the job's working conditions or rewards with concomitant loss of attractiveness to males" (Tallerico & Blount, 2004, p. 636).

Biased selection process. In 1995, Grogan and Henry conducted a study of school board members to determine the role of gender bias in perceptions of female superintendent candidates.

They found that female candidates are at a disadvantage during the search process. Women who possess the credentials, experience, and references to acquire a position as school superintendent are at a disadvantage to men in the search process (Lowery, Buck & Petrie, 2002, p. 244). This applies to intra-district searches as well as out-of-district searches. AASA's 2015 Mid-Decade report showed that males are hired as superintendent from within their current district at a higher percentage than females (Finnan et al., 2015).

"Grogan (1996) maintains that women aspiring to the superintendent positions are viewed as women first, and administrators second" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 768). Lowery et al. (2002) purported that "successfully serving as a superintendent is not nearly as difficult for many women as actually securing the position" (p. 244). This is illustrated by the fact that "65% of school board members interviewed in Radich's (1992) study indicated that gender was a discussion item at some point in their superintendent selection process" (as cited in Tallerico, 2000, p. 94).

Boards of trustees are reluctant to hire a female as superintendent and women are reluctant to enter the pool of superintendent candidates (Phelps, 2002). "Biased selection processes and attitudes can grow out of harmful myths and misunderstandings of women's preparedness" (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 277). "The absence of women in the superintendency at present suggests that women are being seen through traditional theoretical lenses and are being measured against ideals that have historically served men best" (Grogan, 1996, pp. 25-26). Skrla (2003) suggests: [U]nderstanding both the perpetuation of male dominance in the superintendency and the virtual invisibility of the problem might be furthered through examination of underlying normalizations that structure the discourses and practices of educational administration, including the most recent research on the superintendency (p. 252).

Marshall (1981) noted that “institutions are still responsible for equalizing opportunity, but they have failed to develop structures which allow and support women’s administrative careers” (p. 205).

Unrealistic performance expectations. Higher expectations are often imposed on women superintendents than those placed on men (Munoz et al, 2014; Marshall, 1981). Research conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) found that nearly 82% of female superintendents indicated school members did not see them as strong managers, and 76% felt school boards did not view them as capable of handling district finances (Glass, 2000; Munoz et al., 2014, p. 768). Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young & Ellerson found women leave the superintendency due to difficulty with politics of school boards and communities (as cited in Steele, 2002). Women, therefore, not only seemed to be evaluated more critically, but accomplishments had to be highly exceptional to receive recognition (Herber, 2002, p. 138).

The superintendency, as described by Dana and Bourisaw (2006), is “much like a revolving door with terms of two to three years being the average stay. Men consider a term of two to three years as a major win and move on to obtain other superintendent positions, while women may not or will not try to see other superintendent roles with the same ease and tenacity” (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 779). Beekley (1996) conducted case studies in five Midwestern school districts of women who left the superintendency and found "evidence of marginalization and isolation as women in a male-dominated role, overt and covert forms of gender discrimination, and diminished personal quality of life for the women superintendents in her study" (as cited in Brunner, 1999, pp. 37-38).

Gender bias may lead to burnout among female administrators, as they push to prove themselves (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 5). Career socialization theory attributes this to female career-role strain; which Marshall (1981) defined as "the extra expenditure of time, thought, and energy required for training, for special task-learning, and for displays of loyalty and commitment to the career conflict with cultural definitions of women's roles" (p. 208). "Evaluation of the expertise and capacity for females is harsher, pointing out gaps, instead of strengths" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 772).

Lack of support systems. "A lack of female role models and mentors to support women aspiring to the superintendency is considered one of the most significant barriers women face" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 768). "Traditional mentoring typically involves a hierarchical relationship; it is comprised of a senior person who advises and guides a junior or less-experienced colleague. It can be difficult for a woman new to administration to find a suitable mentor of a higher rank, especially if she seeks a female mentor" (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011, p. 17). According to the 2015 Mid-Decade Study of the American Superintendent conducted by the Association of School Administrators, fewer female superintendents and even fewer minority superintendents reported serving as mentors within structured mentoring programs sponsored by professional organizations (Finnan et al., 2015).

Women have a less-developed mentoring system compared to that of men. Women's mentoring systems frequently operate in a limited capacity or lack the crucial players to grow an influential network that guarantee them access to open positions (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 775). Tallerico (2000) cautions that the belief that the American system is a meritocracy in which those with talent and skills will advance ignores "a significant reality... that connections and sponsorship (not individual competence alone) do matter in obtaining employment and

advancement" (p. 85). Mentors provide in-district mobility opportunities for women aspiring to the superintendency and often act as liaisons between superintendent candidates and school boards (Glass, 2000). McClellan, Ivory and Domínguez (2008) found that though superintendents valued mentoring, their daily professional duties did not provide them with the time necessary to effectively mentor a new superintendent.

“For women leaders, networking challenges are associated with absence of access, issues of gender bias, and challenges with life balance” (Raskin et al., 2010, p. 159). Bierema (2005) conducted a qualitative study of ten women who participated in an in-company network within a Fortune 500 company and found that “networks may serve to reproduce patriarchy, not erode it; the level of gender consciousness impacts on network participation and commitment; and network success is impacted upon by organization culture” (Bierema, 2005, p. 217). Women must be willing and able to network with both sexes to advance their careers (Bierema, 2005, p. 209). “Only those who provide the context of the network can influence the way a person is positioned within it. Therefore, it was the ‘significant superintendents’ with whom she ‘rubbed elbows’ that made it happen” (Grogan, 1996, p. 73). When women have access to the network, “they may gain access to informal socialization and sponsorship from members of that group; they have support through any difficulty in training, and they get advice about appropriate career ladder steps” (Marshall, 1981, p. 207).

Internal Barriers to Gender Equity in the School Superintendency

Lack of confidence in abilities. Irby and Brown (1995a) found that men viewed themselves as born leaders; whereas women developed their leadership skills through education and mentorship. This has led some to argue that the dearth of women in the superintendency is grounded in women’s lack of self-efficacy rather than the content of the preparation programs,

the systems of advancement, the “old-boys networks,” and the opportunities for on-the-job training (Grogan, 1996, pp. 25-26). Qualified women who choose not to pursue the superintendency do not have experiences working with school boards; which may negatively affect their confidence in assuming the superintendency (Ottino, 2007 p. 148).

Coleman (2001) argued that "women may not apply for a job unless they truly believe they have all the qualifications, whereas men might apply even if they do not believe they have all of the qualifications" (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 7). Dana and Bourisaw (2006) found that "while males were willing to apply multiple times, females would apply once and give up" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 779). The American Association of School Administrator's study conducted in 2010 revealed that while male and female candidates reported the same top three reasons for being selected for their leadership position (personal characteristics, change agent potential, and instructional leadership), women noted that being an instructional leader was the most important reason for their selection while men said it was their personal characteristics (Kowalski et al, 2010).

Low aspirations for advancement. Research demonstrated that another reason why women are less likely to ascend to the superintendency is that women less frequently identify educational administration as a professional goal early in their careers. According to Ortiz (1982), women in education rarely start out with the goal of becoming a principal and tend to move into administration much later in their careers than their male counterparts (Harris, Arnold, Lowery, & Crocker, 2002, p. 252). The 2015 mid-decade study echoed the findings of the 2010 decennial study that men generally become superintendents before the age of 40; whereas women often are over 50 when they take their first superintendency (Finnan et al., 2015). The research team suggested that "one can speculate that longer teaching experience, later entry into

their first administrative position, and their family profile may be among the contributing factors" (Ibid). Women's reluctance to seek the principalship early in their careers denies them the administrative experiences necessary to move into the superintendency. Women need to begin to see the principalship as a desirable position, that is within reach, earlier on (Harris et al., 2002, p. 255).

Women are not using their administrative credentials to climb the administrative ladder. Skrla reported that "in a study of women with administrative credentials, 127 (65%) of the 196 respondents had not applied for any administrative positions during the last five years. The 69 (35%) women who had applied for administrative positions sent a total of 96 applications: 43 for elementary principalships, 19 for assistant principalships, 17 for coordinator positions, 5 for secondary principalships, 3 for superintendencies, 3 for special education directors, and 3 for directors of student services" (Grady, Krumm & Peery, 2012, p. 93). These numbers appear supportive of Glass' (2000) finding: "[M]ore than half of the women in the AASA study indicated they felt the nature of the superintendent made it unattractive to women working as principals and central-office administrators" (p. 28).

Lack of credentials. Only ten percent of women in doctoral programs are opting to earn the superintendency credential along with their educational specialist or doctoral degree. This suggests that while women are interested in obtaining advanced degrees, they are not doing so to assume a superintendency, but rather other administrative positions in the field of education. "Women face hurdles and disincentives due to (1) unequal access to salient socialization processes and (2) female career-role strain" (Marshall, 1981, p. 207).

Glass (2000) found that more than half of the women who participated in the AASA study felt the nature of the superintendent made it unattractive to women working as principals

and central-office administrators. Daresh asserted "the image of the leader as the Lone Ranger is very much alive in the world of school administration" and may deter women from seeking the superintendency (Steele, 2002, p. 193). In 1999, Sherr published the findings from her study of thirteen female central office administrators that showed a "focus on the negative in the public and political nature of the role, emphasizing potential board conflict, vulnerability of the superintendent, and pressures from multiple stakeholder groups" (Brunner, 1999, p. 34).

Personal and family conflict. Riehl and Byrd (1987) found that women experience greater work-family conflict than do men (as cited in Eckman, 2004, p. 369). "While males are perceived as championing their family struggles by aspiring leadership jobs, power exerted by society shows females as abandoning their families when pursuing leadership positions" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 772). Unlike many of their male counterparts, practices expected of women within partnering and mothering discourses clashed with the demands made on them as educational administrators" (Grogan, 1996, p. 185). "Other factors restricting or holding back women were thought to be nonappealing working conditions, family concerns, and gender discrimination by boards" (Glass & Franceshini, 2007, p. xvii).

A woman who aspires to the superintendency moves back and forth between professional and personal roles (Grogan, 1996, p. 110). The superintendency remains a position with a traditional time schedule despite the changing expectations in the role and "compressed work schedules, flex-time, and teleconferencing from home are currently not options for a superintendent - if they are going to be deemed successful" (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 490).

In terms of the bases of power, it is clear that the discourse of educational administration expects conformity to the male model from women aspiring to the superintendency. It is no wonder then that the women are reluctant to place such pressure on their relationships that they risk losing them, for if they were to do that in order to secure the

superintendency, they would be bereft of the very support systems that enable their male counterparts to be positioned differently in the discourses. (Grogan, 1996, p. 134)

Reticence to address gender issues. "Research that openly declares itself to be about gender tends to bring down shutters on the willingness of men and women to acknowledge it as a factor in their interaction, at least where those working in education are concerned" (Hall, 1996, p. 179). Men and women are reluctant to address issues around gender directly and are more comfortable intellectualizing them (Young, Mountford & Skrla, 2006, p. 272). "Distancing allows students to discuss and analyze isms without having to implicate themselves" (Young, Mountford & Skrla, 2006, p. 267). Marshall (1985) remarked that 'disidentifying with women' was one way that female school administrators manage others' impressions (Tallerico, 2000, p. 132).

"Subtle yet pervasive forms of gender bias may impede women's progress by obstructing the identity work necessary to take up leadership roles" (Ely et al., 2011, p. 75). People are more comfortable stating truisms, such as "slavery is over" or "women and men are equal, so we should just move on," but these phrases make it difficult to meaningfully discuss gender inequity (Young, Mountford & Skrla, 2006, p. 268). A shift toward gender consciousness can serve as "a measure of the degree to which individuals and organizations recognize how gender differences create privilege for men and oppress women" (Bierema, 2005, p. 214).

Women are reluctant to share their professional experiences through a feminist lens. Smulyan (2000) reflected that "where I heard a gendered construction of experience that could fit into a general theoretical framework, they each heard their individual story, unique to them" (p. 590). For example, one woman stated:

I'm certainly not a feminist, but being a female in this organization, I feel it's a man's organization. I certainly feel a sense of being, certainly, not on equal footing with and never will be able to attain an equal footing with the men who are in this organization...

It's just the way it is. But I see that being an important issue for some other women... something that, perhaps, somebody would like to address. Not me. (Callahan & Tomaszewski, 2007, p. 271)

Ottino (2007) found that “there seems to be a notion that it is more politically correct for women to describe themselves as ‘integrated’ into the superintendency rather than as female superintendents” (p. 141). Many women superintendents do not want to be identified as feminists who seek systemic change for fear of professional repercussions. Others may not acknowledge a need for change. Regardless of the reason, women superintendents remain silent about experiences with gender inequality (Skrla, Reyes & Scheurich, 2000, p. 45).

Skrla (2003) attributes women superintendents’ silence to normalization. Normalization occurs when “the individuals who work in the culture adopt and adapt to the existing norms (normalizations) for what is possible and what is not possible for them to think, say, act, and be; at the same time the culture of the superintendency is shaped by the thoughts, actions, and existence of the individuals who are the superintendents” (Skrla, 2003, p. 252). Ultimately, “to be appropriately female is to be silent” (Skrla, 2003, p. 255).

Women administrators may, then, either ignore the issue of gender or develop individual solutions to inequities they and others experience rather than take an activist stance that makes addressing inequality a part of one's work, because the institutional, ideological and social structures within which they operate do not support a collective, activist approach. (Smulyan, 2000, p. 599)

Some women administrators avoid networks designed to support women for fear of how “organizational perceptions of the network” may negatively impact members (Bierema, 2005, p. 216). Young postulated that “in recent years, ambivalence, resistance and antipathy have redeveloped around gender issues, making it more difficult for feminist scholars to continue to work for gender equity in the leadership field” (as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p.3).

Overcoming Barriers Toward Gender Equity

Women who accept and understand their power as educational leaders are able to effectively overcome gender issues and promote wider acceptance of female leaders in education (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 8). De Santa Ana (2008) advised "aspiring superintendents to stay focused, gain experience, take risks, and develop networks, and enlist effective mentors" (as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 8). Preparation and support systems can help women overcome barriers to the superintendency.

Women are well-prepared to assume the superintendency (Brunner & Kim, 2010). "Preparedness consists of three categories: formal, experiential, and personal" (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 277). Research indicated that while women's preparation for the superintendency in these three categories may differ from that of men's, it is not inferior.

Formal preparation. Grogan (1996) defines formal training as including "at least eligibility for, if not completion of, state superintendent certification and a university degree beyond a bachelor's" (Grogan, 1996, pp. 49-50). AASA's Mid-Decade Study of the School Superintendency in 2007 found that 79.2% of superintendents have a master's degree in educational administration. "Interestingly, the numbers of women in educational administration doctoral and master's level programs have well surpassed male student representation by more than 50% over the last decade" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 767). "In fact, larger percentages of women superintendents (57.6% in 2007 study) than men superintendents (43.4% in 2000 study) hold their doctorate degree" (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 283).

Preparation programs are adjusting to meet the evolving needs of today's superintendents and are forecasted to provide a more diverse pool of future superintendents.

Over the next decade, we are likely to see an increase in the number of educational leadership preparation programs that emphasize issues of diversity, ethics, and equity and

utilize transformational learning to train leaders who will be better able to advance social justice in their schools and districts as well as in their communities and society at large. (Young, Mountford & Skrla, 2006, p. 265)

Contemporary graduate programs are increasingly providing students with authentic experiences working with practicing superintendents.

On-site learning activities under the leadership of school superintendents, whether women or men, provide graduate students opportunities to interact with school district leaders other than those in their own districts. On-site learning assignments also provide them opportunities to participate in authentic school district work and to build relationships with school district leaders and school leaders. (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006, p. 213)

Today's superintendent needs extensive experiences in curriculum and instruction (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 286). Using information gathered during AASA's Mid-Decade Study of the School Superintendency, Glass et al. (2007) found that 3.9% of responding Board members in 1980 said they were seeking an instructional leader. In 2006, this number climbed to 49.2%.

Experiential preparation. Brunner and Kim (2010) defined *experiential preparedness* as professional experiences that directly impact an individual's ability to perform in a specific career. Grogan (1996) further described the prior experience necessary as on the job experience in an administrative role, ideally the superintendency, but at least one that requires a person to handle situations commensurate to what a superintendent would experience. "Women who do pursue the superintendency follow a typical route that starts in the classroom, moves from the teaching role into the assistant principalship, to the principalship, then to district administration (e.g., coordinator's position, director, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction) and finally, into the superintendency" (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 495). Though women often move to administrative positions later than men do, women do assume leadership positions that provide them with the skill set needed for the superintendency.

“Kim and Brunner (2009) found in a previous study that while men's average age at first superintendency is 42.7 years, women's average age is 47.3. In other words, while most men enter administration earlier than women, men enter the superintendency only five years earlier than women” (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 293). "The more AASA legitimizes the possibility of preparing for the superintendency by developing leadership potential in positions other than the principalship, the more women and men can confidently offer different kinds of administrative expertise" (Grogan, 1996, pp. 70-71). A paradigm shift needs to occur that offers multiple paths to the superintendency for women to be more proportionately represented in the position.

According to AASA's Mid-Decade Study of the State of the American School Superintendency edited by Glass and Franceschini (2007), the most common position held by responding superintendents prior to the superintendency was that of assistant/associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction. "Women superintendents were much more likely to have entered the superintendency from an assistant superintendent position. The likely reason for this is that fewer female superintendents jump directly from elementary school principal positions to the superintendency" (Glass & Franceschini, 2007, p. 35).

Personal preparation. The final category of preparedness according to Brunner and Kim (2010) is *personal preparedness*, which they defined as one's attitude toward the pursuit of the superintendency. "Based on the 2007 study, among women central office administrators who are not currently positioned in the superintendency, 39.3 percent aspired to the superintendency" (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 284). This demonstrates that there are women administrators who possess the credentials for the superintendency and have the desire for the position.

"A leader identity is not simply the counterpart to a formally held leadership position but rather evolves as one engages in two core, interrelated tasks: internalizing a leader identity and

developing an elevated sense of purpose” (Ely et al., 2011, p. 476). Women educational leaders need the opportunity to develop their leader identity. “While performance, effectiveness, and career success are determined in part by hard work and intelligence, other factors such as social astuteness, networking, positioning, and savvy also have important roles in organizations” (Brosky, 2011, p. 3).

Preparedness includes perceptions on school politics. Lindle (1999) observed that “indeed, most practicing school leaders are already astute, or even unwitting, students of micropolitics. Not only is the study of micropolitics inevitable, for most school leaders it is an inherent occupational requirement” (as cited in Brosky, 2011, p. 2). It would be misleading to suggest that the women leaders were not political or disliked the political aspects of school administration. In fact, according to the 2015 Study of American Superintendents, female superintendent rated their own leadership slightly higher in all categories than male superintendents, including reading at grade level, decreasing the achievement gap, race and gender equality, social justice, and Common Core.

Superintendents are often “faced with other people's political behaviour, incompetent colleagues, the need to push through unpopular decisions and policy challenges to their authority, they would not have survived if they had not drawn on their 'political' skills” (Hall, 1996, p. 159). Ferris (2005) outlines four key dimensions of political skill that must be attained: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. “The reality is that without enough political savvy, a superintendent is unlikely to be able to garner the necessary resources or to command sufficient community support to bring about reform” (Grogan, 1996, pp. 17-18).

Support Systems

Networks. Women who strive for career advancement in any profession must build and grow a network of mentors and sponsors who will guide them (Hall & Klotz, 2001, p. 21). The best personal network forms “a river of people into which more and more helpful people flow from various tributaries all the time” (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, p. 114). “In order to survive in the competitive world of educational leadership, women more than ever need to become a tight knit group of professionals that mentor one another into the ranks of the higher levels of school administration” (Steele, 2002, p. 193). In a survey conducted by Lowery et al. (2002), of 98 female superintendents who attended the American Association of School Administrators, 68% of respondents advised women seeking the superintendency to “Network! Network! Network!” (p. 249). Networking provides a necessary social support for women who seek the superintendency (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 773).

Munoz et al. (2014) further found that networks provided more social capital when they were sizable and diverse (p. 769); this includes an informal network in addition to a formal one. Respondents in a survey completed by Lowery et al. (2002) found that encouragement from another administrator, family members, and/or board members played a role in their decision to seek the superintendency. “The composition of one's informal network can open doors to leadership opportunities, determine who will see and grant (or not) one's leadership claims, and shape what one learns in the process” (Ely et al., 2011, p. 478). According to Catalyst's annual poll in 2000, “the biggest barriers to women's advancement, women said, include being stereotyped by their male managers and being excluded from informal networks” (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, p. 13). “A potential advantage for a woman being mentored by a male superintendent is developing an “in” with the “good ole boys” network” (Dana & Bourisaw,

2006, p. 190). "They [women] must cultivate the relationship with the very people who have the most doubt in their competence when those people are powerful" (Marshall, 1981, p. 213).

"Women need networks because they are not well integrated into men's networks, lack access to top level management, and may be isolated from career paths that lead to power" (Bierema, 2005, p. 208). Networks provide women with an opportunity to collectively build confidence and power so that they are better equipped to succeed in a male-dominated culture (Bierema, 2005, p. 209). "Brunner's (1999) findings noted that women build power by collaboration while men individually work to be in the top position at all cost" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 779). Networks provide a means of reducing isolation and building solidarity among members who share helpful information with one another (Bierema, 2005, p. 216). "Women who aspire to increasingly stronger and more influential leadership positions can find pathways to reaching that goal considerably strengthened when they establish strong and influential networks" (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006, p. 196).

"To be effective at eroding structural inequality and creating atmospheres conducive to women requires that both networks and their organizations function with high awareness and action around issues of gendered power relations" (Bierema, 2005, p. 221). In a qualitative study conducted by Skrla et al. (2000), one respondent, Emma, described the professional organizations as being male dominated with rituals and agendas based on stereotypically male concerns. "Go to any superintendent's meeting and watch the men walk up to each other... the first thing out of their mouths will be, 'How was last Friday night's game?'" (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 64). The presence of other women can help to "close the gap between the different personal worlds men and women administrators inhabit" (Grogan, 1996, p. 95).

Mentors

Mentorship is commonly cited in the research as one of the most effective supports available to women in attaining the superintendency. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a mentor is “someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person,” but a mentor can also be a person whose knowledge and experience can be used to guide others (Roberts, 1999). Levinson (1978) advised that “when you enter a position for the first time, no matter how much experience you have, it is important to have a mentor; someone who can welcome you into the new professional world and acquaint you with “its values, customs, resources, and cast of characters” (as cited in Steele, 2002, p. 192). Women “who obtain mentors may be more adept at dealing with barriers than those who lack mentors” (Ragins & McFarlin, 1990, p. 334).

Research has shown that women more actively use mentoring systems than men in their career paths, but the effectiveness of their mentoring practices is unclear. Women lack access to informal networks constructed by men and therefore may not receive valuable coaching experiences (Brunner and Kim, 2010, p. 301). Salisbury (2002) outlined that effective mentoring should have a flexible structure, include discussion around shared topics, address a wide range of needs, utilize scheduled meeting times, provide feedback and advice to the mentee in a non-threatening manner, and allow for discussion around all aspects of the position.

“A good mentor takes pride in the growth and accomplishments of a protegee and often garners respect from others as a result of working with you” (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, p. 167). Mentorship serves two functions: career-related and psychosocial. According to Kram (1983),

[T]he career-related functions that mentors provide include sponsorship, exposure and visibility within the institution, coaching, protections from criticism and from the

consequences of mistakes, and challenging work assignment in order to help mentees prepare for advancement. Psychosocial functions include helping in developing the mentee's self-confidence and sense of competence and providing acceptance and confirmation, counseling, role modeling, and friendship. (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011, p. 19).

The parameters for mentorship within the professional realm differ by organization.

Ragins defines mentor as someone who is "a higher ranking, senior organizational member with advanced experience and knowledge who is committed to providing upward mobility and supporting your career" (as cited in Ortiz-Walters, Eddleston & Simione, 2010, p. 100). Using this definition significantly limits the number of individuals who can serve as a mentor, especially for women and minorities. The 2015 Study of the Superintendent Mid-Decade Update found that fewer female superintendents and even fewer minority superintendents reported serving as mentors within structured mentoring programs sponsored by professional organizations (Finnan et al., 2015). Ottino found that women who serve in central office leadership positions, but who do not aspire to the superintendency, step away from mentoring and networks because they have "reached the top of their career ladder and do not believe that they need mentors or networking any longer" (Ottino, 2007, p. 151).

For these reasons, some seek to broaden the scope of mentorship to be more inclusive, especially for women and minorities. Beam (2000) offers an expanded definition of mentorship that includes "shared power, inclusiveness, empowerment, connectedness, and focus on the process more than outcomes" (as cited in Gupton, 2002, p. 182). Gupton (2002) argues that "in shifting the paradigm of thinking about who belongs in the leadership pool, we do more than help those who heretofore have been excluded from that select few" (p. 183).

Swoboda and Millar (1986) advocate yet another iteration of the mentorship model that they call "network mentoring." Paludi & Denmark point out that in this model, "two or more

women fulfill the roles of mentor and protege to each other at different times in the relationship. Network mentoring is egalitarian rather than hierarchical and is based on belief and commitment to mutual enhancement" (as cited in Martin, 2011, p. 62). "Thus, the role of mentor is not reserved only to those in formal positions of power, but should be open to all actors; everyone is potentially the mentor of the superintendent, and the superintendent is potentially the mentor of everyone" (McClellan et al., 2008, p. 354).

Ideal Mentor. An ideal mentor is someone who will "take someone along or pull someone else up the ladder" (Grady et al., 1996, p. 88). Regardless of the definition, mentors in educational administration play several roles, including providing support, feedback, and honest appraisal (Hall & Klotz, 2001, p. 23). "Mentors are more important to career success than hard work, more important than talent, and more important than intelligence. Why? Because you need to learn how to operate in the work world...and mentors can teach you how" (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, p. 3).

Daresh and Playko (1993) add to the responsibilities a mentor must perform by including counseling, modeling, advising, communicating, developing skills, and even protecting their mentees. Moreover, "mentors help mentees advance in their careers by sharing information about job opportunities, modeling desirable behavior, and making introductions to individuals who can benefit their mentee professionally" (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993; Hall & Klotz, 2001). "Perceived mentor roles were also strongly influenced by whether the mentor was the protege's immediate supervisor; supervisory mentors received higher ratings than non-supervisory mentors in four of the five career development roles, and in the psychosocial role of counseling" (Ragins & McFarlin, 1990, p. 335). "Through sponsored mobility, proteges get individualized training for

fulfilling career norms and for gaining incorporation in the career group" (Marshall, 1981, p. 207).

What defines a mentor from other, seemingly similar, professional supports, such as career guides? Guides typically possess institutional knowledge that helps a new employee acclimate to the professional environment; whereas mentors go a step beyond and tailor their guidance to the individual. Mentors "focus on the needs of the individuals with whom they are working" (Daresh & Playko, 1993, p. 36). "Effective female leaders should make efforts to support new and aspiring leaders - they should share successful experiences" (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 10). Relationships between established female leaders and aspiring leaders may help to challenge stereotypes, develop women leaders, and encourage women to pursue advancement in the field of educational leadership.

Mentor selection. Mentor selection is vital in forming an effective relationship. "The mentee needs to be able to select who their mentor will be, as building a relationship is the key to successful mentoring" (Steele, 2002, p. 193). "Consider soliciting advice on a given topic from someone you respect as a 'one-shot' mentor, without moving into a more formal relationship. Instead of focusing on mentoring as a relationship, think of it as learning wherever you can" (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, p. 171). According to Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011), aspiring individuals should seek "...mentoring relationships that develop informally, out of natural interactions between the mentor and the mentee and generally more beneficial than formal relationships, where the mentor and mentee are matched through a mentoring program" (p. 18).

"Studies of gender differences indicate that women prefer to have women as mentors, but there are no clear suggestions that women necessarily make better mentors to female colleagues" (Daresh & Playko, 1993, p. 59). A mentee may identify more closely with a mentor, regardless

of gender, if the mentor emphasizes criteria, roles, and preferences that resonate with the mentee (Ortiz-Walters et al., 2010, p. 102). Dunbar and Kinnersley's (2011) study of 239 women in Tennessee who held positions in higher-education institutions revealed no difference between female and male mentorship when speaking to their mentor's ability to carry out career—or psychosocial—mentoring functions. Hall and Klotz (2001) administered a two-part questionnaire to 39 superintendents (20 male and 19 female) employed in the southeastern United States. Results showed that there “were not statistically significant differences found between same-gender and cross-gender mentor/protege groups' scores for helpfulness on career and psychosocial mentoring functions with the exception of sponsorship, friendship and exposure, which were significant for each ANOVA test” (Hall & Klotz, 2001, p. 89).

Daresh and Playko (1993) encouraged consideration of learning styles, leadership styles, and common philosophies/educational platforms when selecting a mentor. Wellington suggested that women in business map out their career plans, identify where help will be needed, and then find a mentor who can meet that need (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, p. 161). Wellington further advised women to seek mentors who will make astute observations, provide constructive criticism, alert them to possible problems or issues, advocate for and praise them to others, and ultimately, push their mentees to reach their fullest potential (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, p. 161). A mentor should strive to advance his or her mentee's performance beyond its present level, even if that means surpassing the mentor's ability at that same task (Hall & Klotz, 2001, p. 32).

Mentorship experiences range along a continuum, from highly satisfying to dissatisfying and/or dysfunctional (Ortiz-Walters et al., 2010, p. 100). Mentees “were more satisfied with mentors who provided greater amounts of career development and psychosocial support,

respectively” (Ortiz-Walters et al., 2010, p. 112). Female administrators who had mentors possessed higher levels of confidence than those who did not have mentors (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011).

Mentor as sponsor. Foucault (1995) asserted that "power in modern societies does not depend upon the prowess and prestige of individuals but is exercised through an impersonal administrative machinery operating in accordance with abstract rules" (as cited in Grogan, 1996, p. 77). Networking and sponsorship are examples of these rules. It is the practice of sponsorship that is powerful; not the individual sponsor. "The persons most influential in helping the respondents to become superintendents were other superintendents. The next most influential persons were school board members and former professors" (Kowalski et al., 2010, p. xviii).

"Sponsors, like mentors on-the-job, can provide excellent opportunities to be socialized for the position for which you are applying" (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006, p.187). Sponsors tout their mentee’s talents and abilities to others, mention mentees who have potential to fill special or existing openings and advocate for them, and advise sponsees (Hall & Klotz, 2001, p. 919). “Given labor-queue selection, particularly around what is perceived as ideal-worker norms within a dominant time structure, supports for women would include a closely integrated system of mentoring and an alternate form of "sponsored mobility" (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 504). In Kowalski and Stouder's study of 15 women superintendents in Indiana (1999), "identifying and maintaining a sponsor" was the highest rated action to attain the superintendency among participants (Kowalski & Stouder, 1999, p. 3).

While it is generally assumed that men have sponsors, Paven (1986) found that females and minorities frequently do not have sponsors; which may help to explain the low numbers of females and minorities in educational leadership (as cited in Hall & Klotz, 2001, p. 49).

According to the Catalyst's Women in Corporate Leadership report in 2003, "both white women and women of color cite lack of access to influential colleagues with whom to network as a major barrier to advancement" (Ely et al., 2011, p. 478).

"What women seeking mentors should know is that women superintendents, in general, have not mentored other women as readily as have men" (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006, p. 192). Hall and Klotz (2001) found that mentors for female superintendents were predominantly male. Daresh and Playko (1993) cautioned that questions of impropriety may arise because mentors and mentees often work long hours together (Daresh & Playko, 1993, p. 62). An additional consideration when pairing a female mentee with a male mentor is that while the mentee may admire the mentor's leadership style, she should be "conscious of not being able to imitate his approach to leadership" (Grogan, 1996, p. 183).

Benefits of mentoring beyond the individual. "Mentoring ensures the development of future leaders at your organization, and thinking of the future must be part of an executive's job" (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, p. 174). The benefits of mentorship go beyond the individual; organizations also benefit. "For centuries, mentoring has been used as a vehicle for handing down knowledge, maintaining culture, supporting talent, and serving future leadership... there has been a strong reproductive element attached to mentoring, well suited to societies relying on ritualized behavior to protect the status quo" (Darwin, 2000, p. 197 as cited in Steele, 2002). Mentorship programs cannot influence change unless they "implement strategies to recruit women, have formalized processes for recruitment, have an induction program for new administrators, and training after placement" (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 8). Mentoring provides opportunities for socialization and allows the mentee to learn 'the culture and values of the school system (McClellan et al., 2008, p. 355).

Summary

“The U.S. public school superintendency continues to be the most gender-stratified executive position in the country, with men 40 times more likely to advance from teaching to the top leadership role in schools than are women” (Skrla, 2003, p. 46). Women seeking the school superintendency encounter exterior and interior barriers. External barriers include persisting stereotypes and gender bias; past practices that disadvantage women; biased selection processes; unrealistic performance expectations; and a lack of support systems. Internal barriers for women include a lack of confidence in abilities; low aspirations for advancement; lack of credentials; personal and family conflict; and a reticence to address gender issues.

“Societal demands have forced changes on the educational landscape and, these demands have, in turn, changed the faces of those leading our schools” (Steele, 2002, p. 190). Women lead with "true heart" vs the "technical rationalism" that has pervaded public schools in the past (Steele, 2002). Women bring a needed skill-set to the superintendency.

"Current thinking argues for the re-vision of a leader who is a facilitator, a catalyst, or a member of a group that together works for social change. If research into women's lives and women's ways has revealed nothing else, it has shown that women's work has been valued for its emphasis on preserving relationships and striving to provide a decent survival for all" (Grogan, 1996, p. 176). Young found that "it appears that while the leadership characteristics commonly associated with the female gender are becoming more accepted and valued, the actual gender is not" (as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 5).

"The absence of women... means that women's influence on policy changes, decisions, and practice in the field is limited" (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006, p. 486). A “research-based

understanding of this inequitable situation from the perspectives of the relatively few women who inhabit this role is needed” (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 46).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gather information from practicing female superintendents in Minnesota about their experiences with mentoring, perceptions of its effectiveness, and recommendations for developing effective mentoring programs. Results from this study will add to the body of knowledge available about how mentorship can encourage more women to seek the superintendency, support new female superintendents, and guide the development of effective formal and informal mentor programs in school districts. A quantitative study was used to gather data. Chapter Three provides a research overview of study participants, instrumentation for data collection and research design, including: conceptual framework, quantitative approach, research questions, and procedure timelines.

Study Participants

Study participants included women superintendents in Minnesota who are members of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA). Active MASA members are an intact group that includes men and women who are currently serving as school superintendents, assistant superintendents, and directors. This study was conducted with the assumption that current employment as superintendent denotes professional proficiency; additional measures of job effectiveness were not explored.

The MASA membership list was disaggregated by gender and all female superintendents in the state of Minnesota were invited to participate in the study, with organization approval (Appendix D). According to MASA, there are currently 53 female superintendents in Minnesota. Group characteristics were not controlled by the researcher, including: age, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, length in position, job effectiveness, and other characteristics.

Human subject approval. The researcher completed IRB training as prescribed by St. Cloud State University through the CITI Training Solution, submitted appropriate application materials, and received approval (Appendix C).

Instrument for Data Collection and Analysis

The instrument selected for data collection was developed to gather information from respondents about their mentorship experiences, perceptions of its effectiveness, and recommendations for developing effective mentoring programs. Questions were developed to elicit information from respondents that would allow the researcher to develop answers to the research questions. Dr. Randy Kolb, Director of the St. Cloud State University Statistical Consulting and Research Center was consulted to insure that the survey instrument would yield valid and reliable results.

Survey Monkey was used to develop an electronic survey to elicit information from survey participants that would be used in the study (Appendix A). The survey required approximately 15 minutes for participants to complete. The first part of the survey gathered demographic information; the second collected information about women superintendents' experiences with mentoring; and the third asked respondents to recommend elements they believe are important in an effective mentoring program. An email was sent to the 53 identified women; the email invited each recipient to participate in the electronic survey, and provided a link to the survey (Appendix B).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study resulted from the discovered underrepresentation of women in the school superintendency. A review of the research revealed that while significant attention has been given to barriers that deter women from the

superintendency, less research exists that deeply examines specific supports and the role those supports play/ed for women who have successfully attained the superintendency. From the research that does exist on women superintendent supports, mentorship has been clearly identified as effective. Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young & Ellerson (2010) found that "Superintendents often mentored colleagues aspiring to be administrators and especially those aspiring to be superintendents. About 83% of all respondents reported that they have been mentored, and percentages for males and females serving in this role were virtually identical" (Kowalski et al., 2010, p. xvii).

A review of the literature clearly identified mentorship as a critical support for women superintendents, but little information was found about women superintendents' experiences with mentoring and the characteristics they believe effective mentors and mentoring programs possess. This study adds to the body of knowledge by soliciting feedback from women superintendents in Minnesota about their experiences with mentoring, perceptions of their experiences, and recommendations for designing effective mentoring programs. Study participants' feedback was framed by sixteen administrative functions that were identified after a comprehensive review of the literature.

This information will add to the body of knowledge from which school districts and aspiring female superintendents can draw to effectively use mentorship as a mechanism for broadening the pool of qualified applicants; as well as support new female superintendents and female administrators seeking the superintendency.

Quantitative Approach

This study was quantitative in nature and designed to answer four research questions. According to Roberts (2010, p. 142), researchers use a quantitative method when they seek to

“see facts and causes of human behavior and want to know a lot about a few variables so differences can be identified.” This approach was selected and an electronic survey was constructed to gather information from women superintendents that would allow the researcher to answer the identified research questions. The researcher collaborated with the Statistical Consulting and Research Center at St. Cloud State University to analyze the data descriptively and identify correlations.

The research was designed to provide insight into the impact of mentorship on women in the superintendency, and to provide useful information about how to better design mentoring programs to support women who aspire to the superintendency. A quantitative approach allowed data to be gathered about the experiences of female superintendents in Minnesota with mentoring. The initial survey was sent to the 53 female superintendents who were members of MASA in February of 2016. Results were used to inform Chapters Four and Chapter Five.

“A quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses postpositivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data” (Creswell, 2003, p. 16). This study used an electronic survey to gather information about women superintendents’ experiences with mentoring in Minnesota. The survey instrument was developed in conjunction with the Statistical Consulting and Research Center at St. Cloud State University to insure the internal validity of the survey items. The survey was created using Survey Monkey.

Research Questions

1. How extensive is mentoring among women superintendents in Minnesota?

2. How do women superintendents in Minnesota describe their experiences with mentoring?
3. What do women superintendents in Minnesota perceive to be important elements of an effective formal and informal mentoring program?
4. What recommendations do women superintendents in Minnesota have for developing effective mentoring programs?

Procedures and Timeline

The survey was sent electronically by email to female superintendents in Minnesota who were members of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators in February 2016. The email explained the purpose of the survey and the manner in which survey results would be used and encouraged superintendents to participate in the study. February was selected as the month for survey distribution with the expectation that the response rate would be greater when the school year was underway, but prior to beginning intensive planning for the 2016-17 school year.

Every attempt was made to secure a statistically significant number of responses to the survey to insure that results yielded a high confidence level. A follow-up communications with respondents was sent mid-way through the two-week survey window expressing gratitude to superintendents who have completed the survey and encouraging those who have not yet responded to do so. MASA Executive Director Dr. Gary Amoroso was contacted to secure MASA's support for this research. In return for that support, significant findings have been shared with MASA for their organization's benefit and use.

The researcher worked closely with the Statistics and Research Consulting Center at St. Cloud State University to analyze the data. Cronbach's Alphas were run and established the reliability of the data. Subsequent analysis focused on descriptive and correlational statistics.

Descriptive analyses included frequencies, percentages, and distributions. Correlational analyses included Spearman's, Levene's, T-Tests, Pearson's R, and Chi-Square.

Summary

This study was designed to provide information about the experiences that current female superintendents in Minnesota have had with mentoring. Fifty-three women, who were currently employed as superintendents in Minnesota and current members of MASA, were invited to participate in the quantitative portion of the study. All efforts were made to insure a high response rate to provide valid and reliable results.

The study was guided by four questions: (1) how extensive is mentoring among women superintendents in Minnesota; (2) how do women superintendents in Minnesota describe their experiences with mentoring; (3) what do women superintendents in Minnesota perceive to be important elements of an effective formal and informal mentoring program; and (4) what recommendations do women superintendents in Minnesota have for developing effective mentoring programs?

The purpose of this study was to gather information from practicing female superintendents in Minnesota about their experiences with mentoring, perceptions of its effectiveness, and recommendations for developing effective mentoring programs. Results from this study will add to the body of knowledge available about how mentorship can encourage more women to seek the superintendency, support new female superintendents, and guide the development of effective formal and informal mentor programs in school districts.

The next chapter, Chapter Four, will report and explain survey results. Descriptive and correlational statistics will be used to identify significant findings. Chapter Five will analyze the results and describe how they add to the current body of knowledge about designing effective

mentoring programs for female superintendents. Chapter Five concludes with recommendations for the field and suggestions for future research.

Chapter IV: FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Introduction

The Study of the American Superintendent conducted in 2015 revealed that 27% of responding school superintendents in the United States were women (Finnan et al., 2015). Though this number has grown from the 21.7% reported in 2006, women continue to comprise a minority of the superintendents, the pinnacle of the educational hierarchy (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). This number is strikingly low when compared with the fact that 72% of American teachers are women (Ibid).

Chapter Two reviewed the literature pertaining to women and the school superintendency. A two-fold theme emerged from this review: (1) barriers exist that deter women's pursuit and achievement of the superintendency, and (2) supports exist that encourage and assist that pursuit and achievement. Barriers have received considerable attention in the literature; whereas the supports have not. One support that has been identified as effective for aspiring women superintendents has been mentorship, but little information was found about the elements of effective mentoring programs for women superintendents in Minnesota.

Purpose of the Study

This quantitative study was designed to solicit information from current women superintendents in Minnesota to gain a broader understanding of their experiences with mentoring and their perceptions of those experiences. The study was conducted in February 2016. Chapter One discussed the study's purpose and design, while Chapter Three described the methodology of the study. Chapter IV reports the results of the study.

Survey and Participants

The researcher collaborated with the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) to identify all women who were currently serving as Minnesota superintendents and active members of MASA. This intact group included 53 women superintendents, all of whom were invited to participate in the study. An email was sent by MASA to potential study participants on behalf of the researcher (Appendix A) that included a description of the research, an invitation to participate, and a link to the electronic survey (Appendix B). Participants were given two weeks to access and complete the survey. An email was sent midway through the two week completion window thanking those who had already completed the survey and encouraging those who had not to do so.

When the survey completion window closed, forty-two women had accessed and forty-one completed the survey; resulting in a 77% completion rate. Survey results are presented in this chapter using narrative and tables. Chapter Four data presentation and analysis begins with a summary of the demographic information of survey participants and their districts. Survey findings will follow, organized by the four research questions listed below. Chapter Five analyzes the results and makes connections to pertinent literature.

Research Questions

1. How extensive is mentoring among women superintendents in Minnesota?
2. How do women superintendents in Minnesota describe their experiences with mentoring?
3. What do women superintendents in Minnesota perceive to be important elements of an effective formal and informal mentoring program?
4. What recommendations do women superintendents in Minnesota have for developing effective mentoring programs?

Survey Results: Participant Demographics

Demographic information was collected about respondents and their school districts.

Specific information was not requested to protect the respondents' anonymity.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present information about respondents' ages and levels of education. Responses indicated that all respondents were over the age of 40 and 59.5 percent were between the ages of 51 and 60 (Table 4.1). Those respondents who held an academic degree beyond a masters of arts or science totaled 97.6% (of which 53.4% had specialist degrees and 35.7% doctorates).

Table 4.1 Reported Ages of Respondents

Age Range	n	Percent
31-40	0	0
41-50	8	19.0
51-60	25	59.5
60+	8	19.0
Total	41	97.6

Note. Percentage does not equal 100 because 41 of 42 survey respondents completed this question. It should be noted that table percentages are rounded to one place past the decimal throughout the study. Consequently, there are instances where - because of that rounding - the sum of table figures does not total to 100.0%. However, if rounding were not undertaken, the sum of table figures would, indeed, total 100.0%.

Table 4.2 Highest Reported Academic Degree Earned by Respondents

Degree	n	Percent
Masters	4	9.5
Specialist	22	52.4
Doctorate	15	35.7
Total	41	97.6

Note. Percentage does not equal 100 because 41 of 42 survey respondents completed this question.

Survey participants were asked about their professional experiences in education. Table 4.3 presents the number of years that participants have served in their current superintendencies. The percent of respondents who reported they had served for five years or less was 63.4%. Only four superintendents or 9.8% reported they have served for ten or more years.

As reported in Table 4.4, 32 of 41 or 78.0% of respondents indicated that their current superintendency was also their first superintendency.

Table 4.3 Years Reported in Current Superintendency

Years	n	Percent
1-5	26	63.4
6-9	11	26.8
10+	4	9.8
Total	41	100

Table 4.4 Respondents' Prior Experience in Superintendency

Experience Level	n	Percent
No prior experience	32	78.0
Prior experience	9	22.0
Total	41	100

In addition to previous experience in the superintendency, respondents were asked to identify all of the previous professional positions they held in the field of education, both in their current school district and in other school districts. Respondents were asked to select all answers that applied. The total number of responses is greater than the number of survey participants. Table 4.5 data reveal that 24 or 58.5% indicated they had not held a position in their current district prior to their superintendency.

The five most frequently selected responses for previous positions held by respondents all occurred in districts other than those in which the respondents were currently serving as superintendents. The most frequently held positions were secondary principal (22), elementary principal (18), other roles (18), associate/assistant superintendent (11), and director of teaching and learning (10). Other roles included ALC principal, gifted and talented coordinator, literacy coach, pre K-12 principal, leadership consultant, co-coordinator of optional year-round district program, and director and consultant.

Table 4.5 Respondents' Previous Positions Held in Same or Different District

Same district		Different district	
None	24	Principal (secondary)	22
Associate or assistant superintendent	7	Other**	18
Teacher	7	Principal (Elementary)	18
Teaching and learning director	6	Associate or assistant superintendent	11
Principal (Elementary)	6	Teaching and learning director	10
Other*	5	Assistant/associate principal	7
Principal (secondary)	5	Superintendent	6
Special services director	3	Community education director	3
Assistant/associate principal	2	Special services director	1
Business/finance director	-	Business/finance director	-
Community education director	-		
Total	65		96

Notes. Respondents asked to check all that apply. Total number of responses is greater than the number of study participants.

* Area learning center director, human resources director, literacy coach, school board member, mentor/curriculum

** ALC principal, gifted and talented coordinator, literacy coach, preK-12 principal, leadership consultant, co-coordinator of optional year-round district program, director and consultant

Nine respondents indicated they had not held an administrative position in another district

As reported in Table 4.6, when asked about the reasons for the pursuit and acceptance of their current superintendency, respondents more frequently selected reasons that described why their current superintendency appealed to them versus reasons for leaving previous positions. The three highest reported responses were “looking for new challenges,” “invited to apply,” and “encouraged by colleagues.” Combined, they received 61 responses or 50.4% of all responses. In

contrast, only 5.0% of responses provided by respondents identified that they were “not happy in previous position” and only one respondent or 0.8% selected “contract not renewed in previous district.”

Table 4.6 Respondents’ Reasons to Pursue/Accept New Superintendency

Reasons to pursue/accept position	n	Percent*
Looking for new challenges	21	17.3
Invited to apply	20	16.5
Encouraged by colleagues	20	16.5
Geographic location of district	17	13.9
Better salary/benefits	13	10.7
Advancement within current district	11	9.0
Search firm recruited	7	5.8
Not happy in previous position	6	5.0
Other**	5	4.1
Contract not renewed in previous district	1	0.8
Total	121	99.6

Notes. Respondents asked to check all that apply. Total number of responses is greater than the number of study participants.

* Percent of total responses

** Desire to lead the district toward vision, good fit, moved, ready for higher leadership, already doing the work

Table 4.7 reports information about the individuals who respondents reported had encouraged them to pursue or accept their current superintendency. Respondents were asked to select all that applied from the list provided. Forty-one respondents produced 148 responses. Thus, on average, each respondent was encouraged to pursue the superintendency by approximately four different individuals and/or groups. The most commonly selected supporters were colleagues, spouse/partner, and school board members.

Table 4.7 People Who Encouraged Respondents to Pursue/Accept Superintendency

People who encouraged to pursue/accept position	n	Percent*
Colleagues	28	18.9
Spouse/partner	26	17.6
School board member	23	15.5
Family	19	12.8
Friends	19	12.8
Outgoing superintendent	15	10.1
Mentor/sponsor	12	8.1
Other**	6	4.0
Total	148	99.8

Notes. Respondents asked to check all that apply. Total number of responses is greater than the number of study participants.

* Percent of total responses

** Administrative colleagues, dean of educational leadership program, former employer, MSBA director, search firm

Survey Results: Research Question One

How Extensive is Mentoring Among Women Superintendents in Minnesota? Research question one sought to establish the extent to which current women superintendents in Minnesota had been mentored. Information provided by MASA confirmed that 53 women were currently serving as superintendents in Minnesota and were members of MASA, though little information was discovered about their mentoring experiences. All 53 of the Minnesota women superintendents identified by MASA were invited to participate in the study. Forty-two superintendents opened the survey and forty-one completed the survey in its entirety.

As reported in Table 4.8, 34 of 41 Minnesota women superintendents or 82.9% were mentored, either formally or informally, in their current superintendency. The seven respondents or 17.1% who reported they did not have a mentor were subsequently asked whether or not they

had a mentor in a previous superintendency. All seven superintendents responded they had also not been mentored in previous superintendencies. A frequency analysis revealed that 28 of the 32 superintendents or 87.5% who indicated they were employed in their first superintendency, also reported that they were mentored.

Table 4.8 Respondents Who Reported They Were Mentored

	Yes	No
Mentored in current superintendency	34	7*

* Respondents also indicated they did not have a mentor in a previous superintendency

Survey Results: Research Question Two

How Do Women Superintendents in Minnesota Describe Their Experiences with Mentoring? Information gathered to address research question one established that 82.9% of survey respondents received mentoring. These respondents were directed to a series of questions designed to garner more detailed information about their mentoring experiences. Respondents who were not mentored were not invited to respond to these questions.

Survey participants reported a variety of methods used for mentor selection. Responses are reported in Table 4.9. Thirteen women or 39.4% of respondents reported they selected their own mentor and eight, or 24.2%, stated that a mentor was assigned to them through a professional organization. The least common method reported for mentor selection was district appointment.

Table 4.9 Respondents' Reported Mentor Selection Process

Methods	n	Percent
Selected own mentor	13	39.4
Mentor assigned through professional organization	8	24.2
Other*	7	21.2
Mentor selected me	4	12.1
District appointed mentor	1	3.0
Total	33**	99.9

* Former boss, Sought out specific mentor/coach, Colleague served as informal mentor, Retired superintendent in same district, Board appointed retiring superintendent and leader of search committee, mutual decision

** One participant did not respond

Survey participants were also requested to identify whether or not their mentoring was formal, informal, or a blend of the two. The percent of superintendents who reported that the type of mentoring they received would best be described as informal or a “mentoring relationship that develops either spontaneously or informally without any assistance” was 58.8%. In contrast, one superintendent or 2.9% stated that she received formal mentoring or a “structured mentoring program that contained specific criteria for implementation.” Thirteen superintendents or 38.2% indicated her mentoring was a blend of formal and informal (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 Respondents' Reported Type of Mentoring Received

Type	n	Percent
Informal	20	58.8
Blend	13	38.2
Formal	1	2.9
Total	34	99.9

As reported in Table 4.11, respondents were asked to report whether or not their mentors were similar to or dissimilar from themselves according to five personal characteristics: leadership style, position/title in district, communication style, age, and gender. The percent of respondents who described themselves as similar to their mentors in leadership style was 88.8%, 87.9% reported they were similar to their mentors in position/title in the school district, and 76.5% reported a similar communication style with their mentors. In contrast, 61.8% of respondents described themselves as dissimilar to their sponsors in age and 79.4% dissimilar in gender.

Table 4.11 Reported Personal Characteristics of Mentors

Mentor Characteristic	Similar	Dissimilar
Leadership style	30	4
Position/title in district*	29	4
Communication style	26	8
Age	13	21
Gender	7	27

* One participant did not respond

Survey participants were also asked to describe their mentors' districts in comparison to their own (Table 4.12). Five characteristics were considered, including: community support, location, socio-economic factors, board relationships, and size. In all five areas, over seventy percent of respondents described their districts as similar to their mentors' districts.

Table 4.12 Reported District Characteristics of Mentors

District characteristic	Similar	Dissimilar
Community support	30	3
Location	29	4
Socio-economic factors	27	6
Board relationships	27	6
Size	24	9

Table 4.13 data reveal a variety of mentor-mentee communication methods. Participants were asked to identify all communication methods that applied. Consequently, the number of responses provided by respondents is greater than the numbers of respondents. Thirty of 34 superintendents reported that their mentoring experience included face-to-face communication. The telephone (27) and email (27) were the next most utilized methods of communication, followed by professional meetings and conferences (19), and text messaging (18). Only three women indicated that social media served as a method of communication with their mentors.

Table 4.13 Methods of Mentor/Mentee Communications

Method	n	Percent*
Face-to-face	30	24.2
Telephone	27	21.8
Email	27	21.8
Professional meetings/conferences	19	15.3
Text message	18	14.5
Social media	3	2.4
Total	124	100

According to Table 4.14, 27 of 32 respondents or 84.4% described the nature of their communication/s with their mentors as informal. Within this group, 14 respondents or 43.8% stated their communications were frequent and 13 respondents or 40.6% identified their communications as intermittent. The remaining five respondents or 15.6% indicated their communications were formal in nature.

Table 4.14 Nature of Mentor/Mentee Communications

Nature of communication	n	Percent
Formal and scheduled	4	12.5
Formal, but intermittent	1	3.1
Informal and frequent	14	43.8
Informal and intermittent	13	40.6
Total	32*	100

*One participant did not respond

As reported in Table 4.15, study participants were also asked about the average length of communications with their mentors. Eleven mentees or 34.4% reported that their communications were less than 30 minutes and 12 mentees or 37.5% related that their communications were between 30 and 60 minutes. Seven mentees or 21.9% described their average communication length as between 60 and 120 minutes and two or 6.3% reported their communications with their mentors lasted more than 120 minutes.

Table 4.15 Respondents' Indicated Duration of Mentor/Mentee Communications

Duration in minutes	n	Percent
Less than 30	11	34.4
30-60	12	37.5
60-120	7	21.9
More than 120	2	6.3
Total	32*	100.1

* One participant did not respond

Respondents who were mentored were provided with a list of administrative functions that often require a school district superintendent's knowledge and understanding. They were asked to indicate the extent to which each function was included in their mentoring experience using a five-level Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always." Table 4.16 reports the respondents' selections by frequency. The three administrative functions that respondents most frequently reported were included either "frequently" or "always" are personnel and human resources, school board relations, and leading change. Grant writing was the only administrative functions that no respondents indicated was included to a greater extent than "sometimes."

Table 4.16 Administrative Functions Included In Mentoring Experiences by Frequency

Administrative Function	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Budget and Finance	4	6	9	12	1
Personnel and Human Resources	3	-	8	16	5
Mission/Vision Development	8	1	16	6	1
Strategic Planning	7	3	13	7	2
Systems Management	2	5	12	10	3
School Board Relations	1	-	10	13	8
Collaborative Leadership	1	6	13	8	4
School and Community Relations	1	1	17	9	4
Instructional Leadership	2	7	10	8	5
Facilities Planning and Management	3	7	14	7	1
School Law – Knowledge of Federal and State Law	5	10	10	6	1
Board Policies	4	8	13	5	2
Grant Writing	21	9	2	-	-
Leading Change	2	4	12	11	3
Delegation and Follow-through	7	10	12	2	1

Table 4.17 presents information about the extent to which the identified 16 administrative functions were included in respondents' mentoring experiences by rank order. Rank order was determined by ascribing a numerical value of one to five to each response, totaling all responses for each administrative function, and then dividing each total by the number of responses. The most frequently rated administrative functions that were included in the respondents' mentoring

experiences were as follows: school board relations, personnel and human resources, and school and community relations.

Table 4.17 Administrative Functions Included in Mentoring Experiences by Rank Order

Administrative Function	Total Points	Average*
School Board Relations	123	3.8
Personnel and Human Resources	116	3.6
School and Community Relations	110	3.4
Leading Change	105	3.3
Collaborative Leadership	104	3.3
Instructional Leadership	103	3.2
Systems Management	103	3.2
Conflict Management	100	3.1
Budget and Finance	98	3.0
Facilities Planning and Management	92	2.9
Strategic Planning	90	2.8
Board Policies	89	3.4
Mission/Vision Development	87	2.7
School Law - Knowledge of State and Federal Law	84	2.6
Delegation and Follow-Through	76	2.4
Grant Writing	45	1.4

* 1 = were never included in their mentoring program and 5 = was always included in their mentoring program

Survey Results: Research Question Three

What Do Women Superintendents in Minnesota Perceive to be Important Elements in an Effective Formal and Informal Mentoring Program? The first two study questions addressed the extent to which women superintendents in Minnesota were mentored and the design of the mentoring they received. The third research question sought to identify elements survey

respondents perceived to be important in their mentoring experiences. The responses are reported below in two sections: mentor characteristics and administrative functions.

The survey instrument was designed to garner information for research question three from both mentored and non-mentored superintendents. The narrative and tables in this section will reveal which group of respondents reported the information presented. Though the number of survey participants who were mentored constituted a smaller sample size, a Cronbach's Alpha Analysis of the results was performed by the Statistical and Consulting Research Center at St. Cloud State University and determined the information to be reliable at a 90% confidence level. The agreeableness subscale consisted of 22 items and equaled .74.

Effective mentor characteristics. In Table 4.18, respondents describe their mentors as similar or dissimilar according to the five characteristics of age, gender, position/title in district, leadership style, and communication style. Each respondent who was mentored was asked to indicate the level to which she believed it was important for a mentor and mentee to have the identified characteristics in common. Respondents' choices included not important, somewhat important, important, and very important. An analysis of the data that ascribed a value of one to "not important" and four to "very important" showed that similarity in age (1.5) and gender (1.4) with their sponsors was of lower importance to respondents. Respondents reported it was beneficial for mentors and mentees to have common positions/titles in the district (3.1), leadership styles (2.7), and communication styles (2.7).

Table 4.18 Perceived Importance of Common Personal Characteristics Between Mentor and Mentee

	#	Rank*
Position/title in district	105	3.1
Communication style	93	2.7
Leadership style	92	2.7
Age	50	1.5
Gender	48	1.4

Note. 1 = not important to have characteristic in common and 4 = very important to have characteristic in common

Table 4.19 presents information from superintendents who were mentored and the level to which they reported it was important to have identified district characteristics in common with their mentors. The data showed that the average rank for all five district characteristics – board relationships, size, location, community support, and socio-economic factors – was between 2.3 and 2.6 using a scale of one to four where one represented “not important” and four represented “very important.”

Table 4.19 Perceived Importance of Common District Characteristics Between Mentor and Mentee

	#	Rank*
Board relationships	86	2.6
Size	84	2.6
Location	77	2.3
Community support	77	2.3
Socio-economic factors	76	2.3

Note. 1 = not important to have characteristic in common and 4 = very important to have characteristic in common

Effective administrative functions. Study participants were provided with a list of 16 administrative functions and asked to identify the extent (never, seldom, sometimes, frequently, or always) to which they believed that each function should be included in an effective mentoring program. Responses were converted to a five-point Likert scale and are presented in Tables 4.20 and 4.21.

A Cronbach's Alpha Analysis of data pertaining to respondents' recommendations for effective mentoring programs found that the agreeableness subscale consisted of 32 items and equaled .93. An alpha score between .9 and 1.0 indicates that the estimated reliability of the items is excellent. Though seven respondents provided the information used in Table 1.20, a Cronbach's Alpha Analysis indicated that the responses were statistically significant with a 95 percent confidence level. The agreeableness subscale consisted of 16 items and equaled .84.

Table 4.20 reports the recommendations for designing effective mentoring programs that were reported by superintendents who were not mentored. Study participants selected from five choices – never, seldom, sometimes, frequently, or always - to describe the extent to which each administrative function should be included. Analysis of the data showed that the five administrative functions that superintendents who were not mentored most highly recommended were school board relations, school and community relations, conflict management, personnel and human resources, and leading change.

Table 4.20 Administrative Functions Recommended by Superintendents Without Mentors

Administrative function	#	Rank*
School Board Relations	34	4.8
School and Community Relations	33	4.7
Conflict Management	33	4.7
Personnel and Human Resources	32	4.7
Leading Change	31	4.4
Budget and Finance	30	4.3
Collaborative Leadership	30	4.3
Delegation and Follow-Through	30	4.3
Instructional Leadership	29	4.1
Strategic Planning	29	4.1
Board Policies	29	4.1
Mission/Vision Development	29	4.1
Systems Management	27	3.9
Facilities Planning and Management	26	3.7
School Law - Knowledge of State and Federal Law	26	3.7
Grant Writing	17	2.4

* 1 = never include in an effective mentoring program and 5 = always include in an effective mentoring program

Table 4.21 reports the recommendations for designing effective mentoring programs that were reported by superintendents who were mentored. Study participants selected from the same five choices – never, seldom, sometimes, frequently, or always - to describe the extent to which each administrative function should be included when designing mentor programs. Analysis of the data showed the five administrative functions that superintendents who were mentored most highly recommended were school board relations, school and community relations, leading change, collaborative leadership, and personnel and human resources.

Table 4.21 Administrative Functions Recommended by Superintendents With Mentors

Administrative Functions	#	Rank*
School Board Relations	137	4.4
School and Community Relations	128	4.1
Leading Change	128	4.1
Collaborative Leadership	125	4.0
Personnel and Human Resources	123	4.0
Budget and Finance	123	4.0
Instructional Leadership	122	3.9
Conflict Management	119	3.8
Strategic Planning	119	3.8
Systems Management	118	3.8
Board Policies	116	3.7
Mission/Vision Development	114	3.7
Facilities Planning and Management	113	3.7
School Law - Knowledge of State and Federal Law	111	3.6
Delegation and Follow-Through	106	3.4
Grant Writing	77	2.5

* 1 = never include in an effective mentoring program and 5 = always include in an effective mentoring program

In addition to looking at Tables 4.20 and 4.21 individually, comparisons between the responses from those who had mentors and those who did not provides additional perspective. When comparing top ranked functions, both groups reported that school board relations and school and community relations are the two administrative functions most important to include in effective mentoring programs. The two groups also reported similarly that the four functions with the lowest priority for inclusion in effective mentoring programs were facilities planning

and management, knowledge of state and federal school law, delegation and follow-through, and grant writing.

The average rank for all administrative functions reported by respondents who were mentored and those who were not mentored was comparable at 4.0 and 4.1 respectively. However, respondents who did not have mentors provided a greater range of responses using the Likert scale than those who had a mentor. The range between highest and lowest rank reported by respondents who were not mentored was 2.4, while the range for respondents who were mentored was 1.9. Survey participants who did not have a mentor ascribed greater importance to inclusion of their top five recommended administrative functions including school board relations (4.8), school and community relations (4.7), personnel and human resources (4.7), conflict management (4.7), and leading change (4.4) than mentored respondents gave to their most highly recommended function school board relations (4.4).

Levene's Test was performed to determine whether the administrative functions recommended for inclusion in the design of effective mentoring program by superintendents who did not have a mentor were statistically considered equal to recommendations from superintendents who were mentored. The null hypothesis – that responses were equal – was accepted for all administrative functions with the exception of school board relations. P for school board relations was .004; which is less than the .05 needed to assume equal variances. Levene's Test determined that the mean rank from superintendents who were not mentored was significantly greater than the mean rank from superintendents who were mentored when recommending the extent to which school board relations should be included in the design of effective mentoring programs.

Survey Results: Research Question Four

What Recommendations Do Women Superintendents in Minnesota Have for Developing Effective Mentoring Programs? The fourth research question sought to gather information from survey participants about their recommendations for the development of effective mentoring programs. Survey results pertaining to this question are presented in two sections: recommendations for mentor characteristics and recommendations for administrative functions.

Recommendations for characteristics of mentors. A Chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between respondents' reported experiences in five areas: age, gender, position/title in district, leadership style, and communication style. The null hypothesis was that respondents' experiences and recommendations were not related. The alternate hypothesis was that there was a relationship between respondents' experiences and their recommendations.

Survey participants' responses about recommendations for effective mentoring programs were combined to create two categories: the responses of "very important" and "important" were combined and "slightly important" and "not important" were combined. The Chi-Square test results were presented in a two-by-two grid format. Synthesizing this information allowed larger cell sizes and increased the reliability of the Chi-Square test without diminishing the quality of the data.

The Chi-Square test confirmed the null hypothesis that a relationship did not exist in respect to age, position/title in district, and leadership style. Their Alphas were .606, .078, and .052 respectively. To demonstrate statistical significance, a p-value of less than .05 was required. Therefore, the relationships found between respondents' experiences and their recommendations

were not determined to be statistically significant in the areas of age, position/title in district, and leadership style.

The alternate hypothesis - that there is a relationship between respondents' experiences and their recommendations - was confirmed by Chi-Square tests in two areas: gender and communication style. Table 4.22 presents the Chi-Square results for gender. Based on Table 4.22, survey participants who have a male mentor are more likely to indicate that the gender of a mentor is not important when developing an effective mentor program. The p-value for gender was .039, which is statistically significant at a 95 percent confidence level.

Table 4.22 Chi-Square Results for Gender

Experience	Important	Not Important	Total
Similar	28.6 (2)	71.4 (5)	100
Dissimilar	3.7 (1)	96.3 (26)	100
Total	8.8 (3)	91.2 (31)	(34)

Note. p-value = .039

The alternative hypothesis was also confirmed in the area of communication style (Table 4.23). The Chi-Square analysis found that the relationship between a respondent's experience and her recommendations were statistically significant at a 99 percent confidence level, as evidenced by a p-value of .003. Survey participants whose experiences included a mentor with a similar communication style were more likely to recommend that effective mentoring programs consider communication style.

Table 4.23 Chi-Square Results for Communication Style

Experience	Important	Not Important	Total
Similar	80.8 (21)	19.2 (5)	100
Dissimilar	25.0 (2)	75.0 (6)	100
Total	63.6 (23)	32.4 (11)	(34)

Note. p-value = .003

Recommendations for administrative functions. A paired T-Test was performed to determine whether a correlation existed between administrative functions that respondents reported were included in their mentoring experiences and the administrative functions recommended by respondents for the design of effective mentoring programs. A positive correlation was found between respondents' experiences and recommendations in all 16 administrative functions. Positive correlations greater than .5 were found for seven of the sixteen administrative functions. The functions with the strongest correlations, listed in descending order, were board policies, strategic planning, mission/vision development, collaborative leadership, instructional leadership, school and community relations, and school board relations. The significance for these correlations was less than .01 and denotes a 99.0% confidence level.

Table 4.24 synthesizes survey findings presented in Tables 4.17 and 4.21 and illustrates how respondents' experiences with mentoring compared to their recommendations for the design of effective mentoring programs. For each of the sixteen administrative functions, respondents recommended that the function should be included to a greater extent in the design of future mentoring programs than it was included in their experiences with mentoring. The five administrative functions for which the respondents recommended the greatest increase were grant writing, delegation and follow-through, strategic planning, budget and finance, and mission/vision development.

Table 4.24 Change in Recommendation for Inclusion of Administration Functions in Effective Mentoring Programs Compared to Experience

Administrative Function	Included	Recommendation	Difference
Grant Writing	1.4	2.5	+1.1
Delegation and Follow-Through	2.4	3.4	+1.0
Strategic Planning	2.8	3.8	+1.0
Budget and Finance	3.0	4.0	+1.0
Mission/Vision Development	2.7	3.7	+1.0
School Law – Knowledge of State and Federal Law	2.6	3.6	+1.0
Leading Change	3.3	4.1	+0.8
Facilities Planning and Management	2.9	3.7	+0.8
Collaborative Leadership	3.3	4.0	+0.7
Conflict Management	3.1	3.8	+0.7
Instructional Leadership	3.2	3.9	+0.7
Systems Management	3.2	3.8	+0.6
School Board Relations	3.8	4.4	+0.6
Personnel and Human Resources	3.6	4.0	+0.4
Board Policies	3.4	3.7	+0.3

* 1 = never include in an effective mentoring program and 5 = always include in an effective mentoring program

Recommended methods of communication. Table 4.25 presents the communication methods that study participants reported were most effective when communicating with their mentors. Respondents were asked to check all methods they found effective. Thirty-two respondents provided 84 responses. The three methods of communication reported most effective were face-to-face (28), telephone (19), and email (15). Respondents did not find social media (8) or text messaging (1) to be effective methods for communication with their mentors.

Table 4.25 Communication Methods Reported Most Effective

Method	n	Percent*
Face-to-face	28	33.3
Telephone	19	22.6
Email	15	17.9
Professional meetings/conferences	13	15.5
Text message	8	9.5
Social media	1	1.2
Total	84	100

Notes. Respondents asked to check all that apply. Total number of responses is greater than the number of study participants.

* Percent of total responses

Conclusion

This chapter reports the findings about the mentoring experiences of women superintendents in Minnesota, their perceptions about the value of their mentoring experiences, and recommendations for developing effective mentoring programs for aspiring women superintendents. A significant demographic finding was that 82.9% of survey participants had a mentor, and the 17.1% who did not have a mentor believed it would have been beneficial to have had one. Seventy-eight percent of respondents reported they did not have previous experience in the superintendency prior to their current position. Of the superintendents who participated in the study, 58.5% did not have previous experience at any level within their current districts prior to becoming superintendents.

Survey participants most frequently reported they were drawn to their current positions because they wanted new challenges, were invited to apply, and/or were encouraged by colleagues. In addition to colleagues, respondents indicated they received encouragement and

support from multiple sources, including spouses/partners, school board members, family and friends. On average, each respondent received support from four different individuals and/or groups.

A Cronbach's Alpha Analysis deemed the study results valid and reliable. The percent of respondents who described themselves as similar to their mentors in leadership style was 88.8%, 87.9% reported they held a similar position/title as their mentor, and 76.5% reported a similar communication style with their mentors. In contrast, 61.8% of respondents described themselves as dissimilar to their sponsors in age and 79.4% reported they were dissimilar to their mentors in gender. The percent of respondents who described the style of mentorship they received as informal or a blend of informal and formal totaled 97.0%. Respondents reported that a variety of methods were used to communicate with their mentors. Face-to-face communication was the method that 71.4% of respondents reported they used with their mentors and 64.3% reported they used the telephone and email to communicate with their mentors. Communications most often lasted 60 minutes or less.

Survey participants identified mentor characteristics they believed were important for mentors and mentees to have in common, including a similar position/title, leadership style, and communication style. Respondents reported that similarity in age and gender were less important. A Chi-Square test revealed a relationship between respondents' experiences with and recommendations for effective mentorship programs in the areas of gender and communication.

Survey respondents who were mentored reported the administrative functions most frequently included in their mentoring experiences were school board relations, personnel and human resources, school and community relations, board policies, and leading change. Grant

writing was the only administrative function that respondents reported was seldom included in their mentoring experiences.

Findings about administrative functions to include in mentoring programs were presented in two groups: recommendations by respondents who had a mentor and recommendations by those who did not. Both groups reported that school board relations and school and community relations are two functions critical to include in effective mentoring programs. Other highly recommended administrative functions included leading change, collaborative leadership, personnel and human resources, and budget and finance. One administrative function that the non-mentored respondents strongly recommended that was not present among mentored respondents' recommendations was conflict management.

A comparison between the level to which identified administrative functions were included in the respondents' mentoring experiences and the level to which they would recommend inclusion yielded a key finding. Respondents recommended that all sixteen administrative functions should be included—to a greater degree than what they experienced—in effective mentoring programs. There were no administrative functions that respondents reported they would include to a lesser degree than that which they had experienced. Analysis of this finding will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter.

Chapter Five examines the study's findings in greater depth, offers recommendations for the development of more effective mentoring programs, and suggests areas for future research.

Chapter V: CONCLUSIONS

Study Overview

This chapter presents a summary of the study and important conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter Four. These conclusions are presented in two sections: Participant Demographics and Research Question Findings. The chapter also discusses study findings in comparison to literature, the implications for professional practice, and recommendations for further research.

Background

According to the *Study of the American Superintendent: 2015 Mid-Decade Update*, women comprise 27% of all school district superintendents. This stands in stark contrast to the fact that 72% of American teachers are women (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Glass (1992) described the superintendency as “the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the country” (p. 8). The literature review illustrated that women have consistently been in the minority in the superintendency even though women have held the majority of teaching positions since World War I (Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Blount, 1999; Glass, 2001).

Women face barriers—external and internal—when seeking the superintendency (Shakeshaft, 1987). External barriers that women experience include persisting gender bias and stereotypes, unrealistic performance expectations, and a lack of support systems (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Criswell & Betz, 1995; Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Grogan, 1986; Ortiz, 1982; Tallerico, 2000). Internal barriers, or ways that women perceive themselves that prevent them from pursuing the superintendency, include "lack of aspirations among women to become administrators, failure of women to receive credentials and apply for administrative positions,

and the personal and family constraints that women face as they pursue administration jobs" (Criswell & Betz, 1995, p. 28).

Although women face barriers when seeking the school superintendency, the literature also identified factors that support women in their pursuit for the superintendency. Women are well prepared for the superintendency. Preparedness consists of three levels: formal, experiential, and personal (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 277). Research indicated that while women's preparation for the superintendency in these three categories may differ from that of men's, it is not inferior.

The literature also identified network and mentorship as supports available to women aspiring to the superintendency. Women who strive for career advancement in any profession must build and grow a network of mentors and sponsors who will guide them (Hall & Klotz, 2001, p. 21). "Women who aspire to increasingly stronger and more influential leadership positions can find pathways to reaching that goal considerably strengthened when they establish strong and influential networks" (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006, p. 196).

Statement of the Problem

The literature clearly established that mentorship is an effective professional support to women seeking the superintendency. However, little information was found about the extent to which women superintendents in Minnesota have been mentored or the qualities that women superintendents in Minnesota believed were crucial in effective mentoring programs, either formally or informally.

Purpose of the Study

The research was designed to provide insight into the impact of mentorship on women in the superintendency in Minnesota. It was also designed to furnish useful information to school

districts and professional organizations about how to more effectively utilize mentoring to support women who aspire to the superintendency. The quantitative data that were gathered described the experiences female superintendents in Minnesota have had with mentoring and their perceptions about the effectiveness of those experiences.

Assumptions of the Study

This study is predicated on several assumptions. The first is that the superintendency is considered the pinnacle position of K-12 educational administration. This assumption is based on the placement of the superintendent at the apex of most school system's organizational charts. Similarly, a superintendent receives greater compensation compared to other administrators in the same school system.

A second assumption is that current employment as superintendent implies that he or she likely possesses valuable insight regarding effective leadership. Therefore, all women in Minnesota who hold the position of superintendent and are active members of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators were invited to participate in the study.

A third assumption inherent in this method of data collection was that respondents answered honestly. Responses were analyzed as truthful representations of respondents' experiences and perceptions.

Methodology

The researcher collaborated with the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), a preeminent professional organization for superintendents in the state, to identify and contact women superintendents in Minnesota who were current members of MASA. This group included 53 women, all of whom were invited and encouraged to participate in the study. At the

close of the two-week survey window, 77.4% of the women invited to participate in the study had accessed and completed the electronic survey.

The quantitative survey was developed under the supervision of Dr. Randy Kolb, Director of the Statistical Consulting and Research Center at St. Cloud State University, to ensure that questions garnered responses that would provide valid and reliable information to address the questions that guided the research. After a brief introduction, survey participants were asked to share basic demographic information, experiences with mentoring, perceptions of the effectiveness of mentoring, and recommendations for developing effective mentoring programs. The survey required approximately 15 minutes to complete and consisted of multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank items created using Survey Monkey.

Research Questions

The research was designed to answer four research questions. These questions guided the development of survey items used to collect information from women superintendents who participated. A quantitative approach was used to analyze responses and construct answers to the four research questions:

1. How extensive is mentoring among women superintendents in Minnesota?
2. How do women superintendents in Minnesota describe their experiences with mentoring?
3. What do women superintendents in Minnesota perceive to be important elements of an effective formal and informal mentoring program?
4. What recommendations do women superintendents in Minnesota have for developing effective mentoring programs?

Limitations

In addition to the delimitations identified at the outset of the study, limitations arose during the conduct of the study that were not anticipated. Possible vehicles for reconciling or overcoming these limitations in further research are addressed later in the section of the chapter, “Recommendations for Future Research”. Limitations:

1. The number of participants who reported they had not been mentored was seven. This was a small sample size and prevented the researcher from making statistically valid conclusions that could be generalized.
2. In the study, all of the respondents were members of MASA. Given this organization provides mentoring support, some of the results may be affected by the large number of MASA respondents.

Participant Demographics

Career path. The study confirmed several findings from the literature about the superintendency. Survey results support the traditional career path as outlined in the 2015 Study of the American Superintendent that describes the path to the superintendency from classroom teacher, to site administrator, to assistant superintendent, and finally to superintendent. Female superintendents who participated in the survey most frequently described their career paths as including: classroom teacher, secondary and/or elementary principal, associate or assistant superintendent, and director of teaching and learning.

The literature described the elementary principalship as one that is often not considered as complex or difficult as the secondary principalship, and therefore less likely to prepare an individual for the superintendency (Tallerico, 2000, p. 79). Twenty-four study participants reported having had experience as an elementary principal, either in her current district or in a

previous district. Among these 24 respondents, most reported one or more additional leadership experiences. This supports the literature that the elementary principalship is frequently not a direct stepping-stone to the superintendency and elementary principals need additional administrative experiences before consideration for the superintendency.

Years of age. This study confirmed the literature, that the average age of women superintendents is older than their male counterparts. The 2015 Study of American Superintendents found that “most superintendents enter the superintendency in their late 30’s and early 40’s.” The study did not ask participants to share their age when they first became a superintendent. The study did request current ages and no participants responded that they were currently under the age of 41. The percent of study participants who indicated they were over 51 years of age was 78.5%. The percent of respondents who reported they were in their first superintendency was 78.0% and 63.4% reported they were in the first five years of their current position. These findings counter the possible argument that women superintendents have simply held their positions for greater lengths of time and are, therefore, older. A doctoral study of women superintendents in Minnesota conducted in 2013 found that 73.5% of respondents were over 50 years-old (Wyland, 2014, p. 62). The number of women superintendents who reported they were over 50 in 2016 was 78.5%. This increase of five percent suggests that the age at which women in Minnesota are becoming superintendents is increasing.

District recruitment. The 2015 Study of American Superintendents found that males are hired as superintendent within their current district at a higher percentage than females (Finnan, McCord, Stream, Mattocks, Petersen and Ellerson, 2015). This study did not focus on a comparison of hiring between men and women superintendents; however survey results show that 58.5% of participants had not held any position within their district prior to securing the

superintendency. This percentage is comparable to the 53.8% of female superintendents in the national survey who stated they were hired from outside their district, as compared to only 41.1% of males (Finnan et al., 2015).

Network support. Lowery et al. (2002) conducted a survey and found that superintendents' decisions to seek the position were influenced to do so by another administrator, family members, and/or board members. Similarly, participants in the study reported that they received encouragement from colleagues, spouse/partner, school board member(s), family, and friends. On average, each respondent shared having been supported by four different individuals and/or groups. The finding suggests that women who seek the superintendency were well-supported and received encouragement from people in their professional and personal lives.

Education level. Survey results echoed the literature that women are formally, well-prepared for the superintendency. The percent of survey participants who reported they hold a doctorate degree was 35.5%, 52.4% of survey participants hold a specialist license, and 9.5% of survey participants have earned a master's degree. Brunner and Kim (2010) found that 57.6% of women superintendents hold their doctorate degree; which is twenty percentage points higher than found in this research.

In Wyland's study of women superintendents in Minnesota in 2013, 32.4% of women superintendents in Minnesota reported having earned a doctorate degree; however respondents described the doctorate as the least important positive career influence. Over forty percent of respondents in the 2013 study rated the doctorate as "not at all important" (Wyland, 2014 p. 68). This study did not address respondents' perceptions about the significance of their academic accomplishments.

Research Findings: Question One

How Extensive is Mentoring Among Women Superintendents in Minnesota? Of the study participants, 82.9% reported they had been mentored. Comparable studies in recent years have reported higher percentages of mentorship among women superintendents. A study of women superintendents in Minnesota conducted in 2013 reported that 91.2% of respondents reported they were influenced by a mentor (Wyland, 2014, p. 63). The 2015 Study of the American Superintendent indicated that 93.5% of women superintendents in the United States were mentored. Survey methods and analysis of the results differed between the studies, but the percentage of women who reported they were mentored in the study was seven to ten percent lower than the findings in the other two studies.

Thirty-two of the forty-one women superintendents or 78.0% who participated in the study reported they did not have previous experience in the superintendency prior to their current position. Of these thirty-two, a frequency analysis revealed that four superintendents or 12.5% were not mentored. This was contrary to the recommendations found in the literature that espouse the benefits of mentoring. Wellington and Catalyst (2001) state, "Mentors are more important to career success than hard work, more important than talent, and more important than intelligence. Why? Because you need to learn how to operate in the work world...and mentors can teach you how" (p. 3).

Research Findings: Question Two

How Do Women Superintendents in Minnesota Describe Their Experiences with Mentoring? Those study participants who were mentored were asked to report on a series of questions designed to acquire information about their mentoring experiences. The seven respondents who reported they had not been mentored were only asked whether or not they

would have benefited from mentoring, responding to the statement, “although I was not mentored in my current position or previous positions, I believe the process would have benefited me.” Five respondents reported they agreed with the statement and two strongly agreed with it.

The number of study participants who reported their mentoring relationships were primarily informal in nature was 20 or 58.8%. Informal mentorship was defined as a “mentoring relationship that develops either spontaneously or informally without any assistance.”

One respondent described her mentoring program as solely formal. Formal mentorship was defined for study participants as a “structured mentoring program that contains specific criteria for implementation.” Thirteen respondents or 38.2% reported that their mentoring experiences included a blend of formal and informal mentorship.

The literature supported the study finding that mentorship programs were primarily informal in nature. Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) recommended that aspiring individuals should seek “...mentoring relationships that develop informally, out of natural interactions between the mentor and the mentee and generally more beneficial than formal relationships, where the mentor and mentee are matched through a mentoring program” (p. 18). Salisbury (2002) outlined that effective mentoring should have a flexible structure, include discussion around shared topics, address a wide range of needs, utilize scheduled meeting times, provide feedback and advice to the mentee in a non-threatening manner, and allow for discussion around all aspects of the position.

Women who were mentored were provided with a list of sixteen administrative functions identified after a comprehensive review of the literature that often require a school district superintendent’s knowledge and understanding. The sixteen administrative functions included:

- budget and finance,
- personnel and human resources,
- mission/vision development,
- strategic planning,
- systems management,
- school board relations,
- collaborative leadership,
- school and community relations,
- instructional leadership,
- facilities planning and management,
- school law: knowledge of federal and state law,
- board policies,
- conflict management,
- grant writing,
- leading change, and
- delegation and follow-through.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each function was included in their mentoring experiences using a five-level Likert scale ranging from “never” to “always.”

The results showed that school board and community relations ranked respectively, as the first and third most commonly included administrative functions in study participants’ mentoring experiences. The literature supported the findings that school board and community relations are critical skills for a superintendent’s longevity. Kowalksi’s study found that women left the superintendency due to difficulties with school board and community politics (Steele, 2002).

Additional training and support in these two functions may help retain women in the superintendency.

It was surprising that study respondents did not report the budget and finance function as frequently among their mentoring experiences. The literature discussed gender bias as a barrier to women seeking the superintendency and cited finance as an area of specific concern. School board members and selection committees frequently question whether a woman superintendent can effectively manage district finances (Glass, 2000; Munoz et al., 2014). Respondents reported budget and finance as the ninth administrative function out of sixteen most frequently included in their mentoring experiences.

Research Findings: Question Three

What Do Women Superintendents in Minnesota Perceive to Be Important Elements of an Effective Formal and Informal Mentoring Program? A significant study finding was that women do not prefer women mentors. This finding was contrary to that which the literature suggested. Daresh and Playko (1993) found that “studies of gender differences indicate that women prefer to have women as mentors,” but twenty-seven of thirty-four survey participants, or 79.4%, had a male mentor and did not believe that the experience would have been more beneficial with a female mentor. Moreover, twenty-four respondents or 70.6% indicated that gender should not be an important consideration when developing an effective mentoring program.

Conclusions were drawn from study participants’ responses to questions about the gender of their mentors and whether or not they believed it was important for a mentee to have a mentor of the same gender. The null hypothesis when analyzing the results was that no relationship existed between respondents’ experiences and their recommendations, but a Chi-Square test (see Table 1.22 in Chapter Four) found that a relationship did exist. Study participants who have a

male mentor were more likely to indicate that the gender of the mentor was not important when developing an effective mentor program than participants who had a female mentor. The p-value for gender was .039, which was statistically significant with 95% confidence.

Respondents reported that mentoring programs are most effective when mentees and mentors possess similar communication styles, position/title in district, and leadership style. A Chi-Square analysis of survey data found a statistically significant relationship between a respondent's experiences with communication styles and her recommendations about the importance of a mentor and a mentee sharing similar communication styles. Survey participants who shared the same communication style as their mentors were more likely to recommend that effective mentoring programs consider communication style when pairing mentors with mentees.

An interesting finding was that while both mentored and not mentored superintendents recommended similar administrative functions, superintendents who were not mentored recommended inclusion more strongly as shown by the data. Respondents who did not have mentors also provided a greater range of responses on the Likert scale than those who had a mentor. The range between highest and lowest rank reported by respondents who were not mentored was 2.4, but the range between the highest and lowest for respondents who were mentored was 1.9. Survey participants who did not have a mentor ascribed greater importance to inclusion of their top five recommended administrative functions including school board relations (4.8), school and community relations (4.7), personnel and human resources (4.7), conflict management (4.7), and leading change (4.4) than mentored respondents gave their most highly recommended function school board relations (4.4).

Research Findings: Question Four

What Recommendations Do Women Superintendents in Minnesota Have for Developing Effective Mentoring Programs? Study participants were asked to make recommendations on the design of effective mentoring programs by ranking the extent to which sixteen administrative functions should be included in aspiring superintendent training. Based on analysis of participants' responses about their experiences with mentoring and their recommendations for designing effective mentor programs, the data show that current mentoring programs are designed around administrative functions that women superintendents deem important. The following scatterplot (Figure 5.1) demonstrates this. The clustering of responses along the diagonal line represents a strong correlation between the administrative functions that were included in mentoring programs and the functions that respondents recommend should be included.

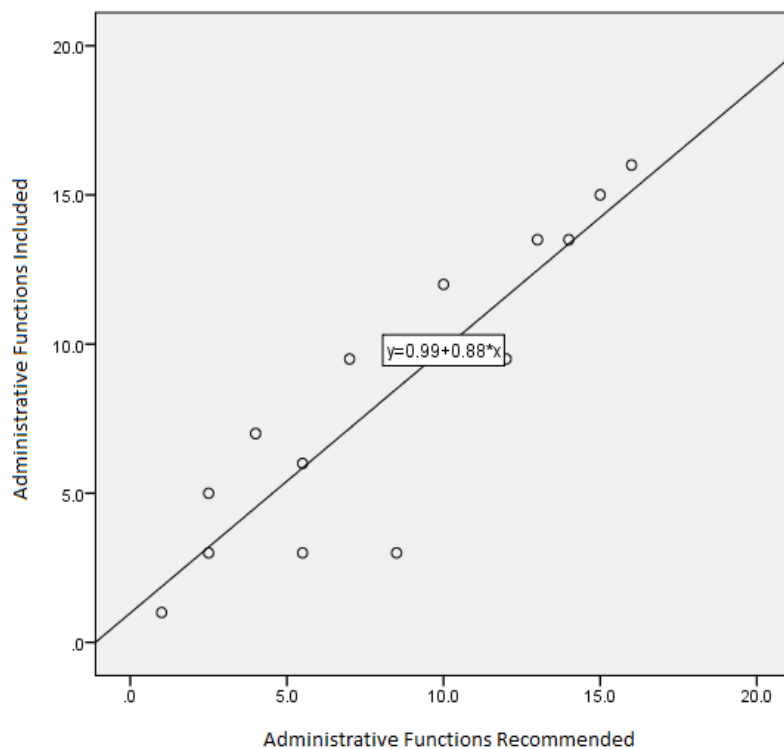


Figure 5.1 Respondents' Recommended Administrative Functions vs. Included Functions

Study results showed that women superintendents did not want *different* content, they wanted *more*. Four administrative functions—school board relations, personnel and human resources, school and community relations, and leading change—appeared in the five highest-ranked functions that respondents reported were included in their mentoring programs. The same four administrative functions were also the most highly recommended functions by respondents for inclusion in effective mentoring programs. For each of the 16 administrative functions, respondents recommended that the function should be included to a greater extent in the design of future mentoring programs than it was included in their experiences with mentoring.

Study participants reported that school board relations was the administrative function most often included in their mentoring programs at the rate of 3.8; but respondents recommended that school board relations should be included in mentoring programs at an even higher rate. Respondents who had not been mentored assigned school board relations a 4.8 and respondents who were mentored assigned it a value of 4.4. These values suggest that, although school board relations was the administrative function respondents reported was most often included in their mentoring programs (3.8), respondents recommended that it should be included to an even greater extent (4.4 and 4.8) when effective mentoring programs are designed.

Respondents reported that school and community relations was an administrative function that was included in their mentoring at a high level, but respondents recommended that it should be included in effective mentoring programs to an even greater extent. Respondents reported that school and community relations was included in their mentoring experiences at a 3.4 value. When recommending the level to which this function should be included when designing mentoring programs, respondents who were mentored recommended it at the level of 4.1 and respondents who were not mentored recommended it at the level of 4.7.

Personnel and human resources (3.6) was another administrative function that respondents reported was frequently included in their mentoring programs. Similar to other administrative functions, respondents who had been mentored and those who were not mentored both recommended inclusion of personnel and human resources in mentoring programs at a higher rate. Respondents who were mentored recommended that personnel and human resources should be included at the rate of 3.9. Respondents who were not mentored recommended this function at a rate of 4.7. Although the data suggest that mentorship experiences included slightly less direction about personnel and human resources (3.6) than respondents would have wanted (3.9), respondents who were not mentored recommended personnel and human resources to a greater extent (4.7).

Leading change was the fifth highest ranked administrative function included in mentoring experiences. Superintendents who were mentored reported that leading change was included during their mentoring programs at the rate of 3.3. This function was recommended for even greater inclusion by both superintendents who were mentored (4.1) and those who were not mentored (4.4). Professional organizations, districts, and organizations involved in developing mentorship programs for women superintendents in Minnesota can use this information to design and build even more effective mentoring programs.

Key Field Recommendations

Survey findings provide a wealth of information about how to develop more effective mentoring programs for women superintendents in Minnesota. Better mentoring programs will help attract administrators to the superintendency, support job retention, and create a network of more effective school superintendents. “Professional networking offers a system for women to enhance their career opportunities...” and given the limited networking opportunities currently

available for women...it becomes the responsibility of professional organizations to work in partnership with higher education to ensure these opportunities for women exist” (Raskin et al., 2010, p. 164). This research provides information that can be used to help develop more effective mentorship programs. The findings can be implemented immediately by districts, professional organizations, and other groups who strive to design exemplary mentorship programs for school superintendents. These findings have been condensed into the following three bullets:

- **Gender and age are not significant when selecting an appropriate mentor for female superintendents.** However, it is important that mentors and mentees have comparable positions/titles in their district, leadership style, and communication style. District characteristics, including size, location, socio-economic factors, community support, and board relationships do not need to be strongly correlated for an effective mentor-mentee relationship.
- **The most effective forms of mentor/mentee communication are face-to-face meetings, telephone, and email.** Respondents did not find social media or text messaging to be among the more effective methods for communication. Program design should include time where mentees can meet in-person with their mentors.
- **Current mentor programs already contain content that women superintendents consider important.** Survey participants did not suggest that any of the sixteen administrative functions included in the survey should be included to a lesser degree. To the contrary, participants wanted more of all the functions.

There are countless ways that programs can build more support into mentoring programs. One possibility would be to increase the length of mentor programs. Another possibility would

be to increase the frequency of mentor/mentee meetings or to provide longer meeting times. The solution can be adjusted to best meet the needs of the individuals involved.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations for further research will explore and build upon the present findings. Recommendations may lessen the limitations identified in the study and increase the information available about women superintendents mentoring experiences in Minnesota and their recommendations for the design of effective mentoring programs.

- **Increase survey sample size** by including additional superintendents such as women who have retired from or left the superintendency, broadening the geographic borders of the study to include women superintendents in other states and/or countries, or including men superintendents.
- **Conduct qualitative research** that allows survey participants to provide more descriptive information about their experiences with mentoring and their recommendations for designing mentoring programs.
- **Examine interest of study participants** to serve as mentors.

Women superintendents are willing to invest the time and energy to share how mentorship programs in Minnesota can be improved. In 2013, the pool of women superintendents in Minnesota who were members of MASA was 47. These women were invited to participate in Dr. Catherine Wyland's doctoral research conducted through St. Cloud State University. Thirty-four women, or 72.4%, completed the survey (Wyland, 2013, p. 35). In 2016, the number of women superintendents in the same pool increased to 53 women and 77.4%, or 41 women, participated. This increase suggests that women superintendents are willing to share

their experiences to support efforts to improve women's access to, and success in, the school superintendency.

Conclusion

Ella Flagg Young, superintendent of Chicago schools in 1909, predicted “in the very near future, we will have more women than men in executive charge of the vast education system” (Glass, 2000, p. 28). Over a century later, the executive position in the school organizational chart—the superintendency—continues to be filled primarily by men.

Women have faced and continue to face barriers when seeking the superintendency, but practices also exist that support women who aspire to be school superintendents. The literature identified mentoring as a positive support for women superintendents, but little information was found about effective mentoring practices. This study was designed to provide information about the experiences that current female superintendents in Minnesota have had with mentoring.

This research was guided by four questions: (1) how extensive is mentoring among women superintendents in Minnesota; (2) how do women superintendents in Minnesota describe their experiences with mentoring; (3) what do women superintendents in Minnesota perceive to be important elements of an effective formal and informal mentoring program; and (4) what recommendations do women superintendents in Minnesota have for developing effective mentoring programs?

The purpose of the study was to gather information from practicing female superintendents in Minnesota about their experiences with mentoring, perceptions of its effectiveness, and recommendations for developing effective mentoring programs. Study results and analysis adds to the body of knowledge available about how mentorship can encourage more

women to seek the superintendency, support new female superintendents, and guide the development of effective formal and informal mentor programs in school districts.

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Appendix A: Survey

Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring

Informed Consent - Survey

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore the mentorship experiences of women superintendents in Minnesota. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently a woman serving as a superintendent in Minnesota. Due to the relatively small number of women in this position, your response will be particularly important. This research is being conducted by Amy Denneson to satisfy the requirements of a Doctoral Degree in Educational Administration and Leadership at St. Cloud State University.

The objective of this research is to gather information about the extent to which women superintendents in Minnesota have been mentored and how they describe those experiences. Participants will also be asked to share their perceptions about elements they found to be important in their mentoring experiences and to make recommendations about how to create more effective mentoring experiences for future women superintendents.

If you are willing to participate in this research, you will be asked to complete an anonymous survey, using the tool Survey Monkey. The information you provide will be analyzed as an aggregate group and no information that could identify you as an individual will be reported. The results of this survey will be shared with the Minnesota Association of School Administrators and published to inform the development of more effective mentoring programs to encourage women to pursue the superintendency.

If you would like a copy of the study results, please contact the researcher. If you have any additional questions, you may contact the researcher Amy Denneson at deam0901@stcloudstate.edu or the doctoral advisor Dr. John Eller at jfeller@stcloudstate.edu.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Please remember that the information gathered will be kept anonymous and confidential. The information will be used to inform the development of effective mentoring programs for women superintendents. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

The survey was designed to gather information about the extent to which women superintendents in Minnesota have been mentored and how they describe their experiences. Additionally, respondents will be asked to share their perceptions of the effectiveness of various mentoring practices and to recommend practices for effective mentoring programs. The time required to complete this questionnaire is approximately 15-20 minutes.

The demographic information you will be asked to provide will assist the investigator to determine whether mentoring experiences vary by demographic group. All data will be kept confidential and no birth dates, social security numbers, addresses, or names will be required. Your completion of this survey indicates your consent to participate.

* 1. Do you wish to participate in the following survey?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Demographic Information

* 2. What is your current age?

☐ 30-40

☐ 51-60

☐ 41-50

☐ 61+

* 3. What is the highest academic degree you have obtained?

☐ Masters

☐ Specialist

☐ Doctorate

* 4. How many years have you been in your current position as superintendent?

* 5. Is this your first superintendency?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 6. How many years of school and/or district level administrative experience did you have prior to your current position?

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* 7. What previous positions, if any, did you hold in your current district prior to becoming superintendent? (check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Services Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant/Associate Principal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assoc./Asst. Superintendent | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Education Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Finance Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Principal (Secondary) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching and Learning Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Principal (Elementary) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | | |

* 8. What administrative positions did you hold in other districts prior to your current superintendency (check all that apply)?

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching and Learning Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Principal (Secondary) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assoc./Asst. Superintendent | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Services Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Principal (Elementary) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Finance Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Education Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant/Associate Principal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | | |

Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring

* 9. What led you to pursue/accept your current position as superintendent? (check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invited to apply | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract not renewed in previous position | <input type="checkbox"/> Geographic location of district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looking for new challenges | <input type="checkbox"/> Advancement within current district | <input type="checkbox"/> Search firm recruited |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not happy in previous position | <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraged by colleagues to apply | <input type="checkbox"/> Better salary/benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | | |

* 10. Who encouraged you to accept your current position as superintendent? (check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outgoing superintendent | <input type="checkbox"/> Colleagues | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School board member | <input type="checkbox"/> Community members | <input type="checkbox"/> Family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor/sponsor | <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/partner | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | | |

Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring

* 11. Did/Do you have a mentor - either formally or informally - in your current superintendency?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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* 12. Did you have a mentor - either formally or informally - in a previous superintendency?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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13. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement:

Although I was not mentored in my current position or previous positions, I believe the process would have benefited me.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

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* 14. Listed below are areas that often require a school district superintendent's knowledge and understanding. Please read each item and indicate the extent to which you feel the following administrative functions *should be included* in an effective mentoring experience.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Budget and Finance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personnel and Human Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mission/Vision Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Systems Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Board Relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborative Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School and Community Relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructional Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilities Planning and Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Law - Knowledge of Federal and State Law	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board Policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grant Writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading Change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delegation and Follow-Through	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring

* 15. Listed below are areas that often require a school district superintendent's knowledge and understanding. Please read each item and indicate the extent to which you feel the following administrative functions *should be included* in an effective mentoring experience.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Budget and Finance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personnel and Human Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mission/Vision Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Systems Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Board Relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborative Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School and Community Relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructional Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilities Planning and Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Law - Knowledge of Federal and State Law	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board Policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grant Writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading Change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delegation and Follow-Through	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring

* 16. Did you have a mentor - either formally or informally - in a previous superintendency?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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* 17. How would you describe the type of mentoring you received?

- ☐ Formal (structured mentoring program that contains specific criteria for implementation)
- ☐ Informal (mentoring relationship that develops either spontaneously or informally without any assistance)
- ☐ Blend of formal and informal

* 18. Would you describe your mentor as more similar or dissimilar to yourself according to the following characteristics?

	Similar	Dissimilar
Age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Position/title in district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 19. Please indicate to what level you believe it is important for a mentor and mentee to have the following characteristics in common.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Position/title in district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring

* 20. Would you describe your mentor's district as more similar or dissimilar to yours according to the following characteristics?

	Similar	Dissimilar
Size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socio-economic factors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 21. Please indicate to what level you believe it is important for a mentor and mentee to have the following district characteristics in common.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socio-economic factors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring

* 22. How was your mentor selected?

- ☐ I selected my own mentor
- ☐ My district appointed a mentor to me
- ☐ A mentor was assigned to be through a professional organization (ex. Minnesota Association of School Administrators)
- ☐ My mentor selected me
- ☐ Other (please specify)

23. What method(s) of communication did you and your mentor use? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text message | <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting at professional meetings/conferences or through professional organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

24. Which method(s) of communication did you find most effective in the capacity of your mentor/mentee relationship? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text message | <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting at professional meetings/conferences or through professional organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring

* 25. How would you describe the nature of your mentor/mentee communications?

☐ Formal and scheduled

☐ Informal and frequent

☐ Formal, but intermittent

☐ Informal and intermittent

* 26. What was the average duration of your mentor/mentee communications?

☐ Less than 30 minutes

☐ Between 60 and 120 minutes

☐ 30-60 minutes

☐ More than 120 minutes

Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring

* 27. Listed below are areas that often require a school district superintendent's knowledge and understanding. Please read each item and indicate the extent to which you feel the following administrative functions *were included* in your mentoring experience.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Budget and Finance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personnel and Human Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mission/Vision Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Systems Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Board Relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborative Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School and Community Relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructional Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilities Planning and Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Law - Knowledge of Federal and State Law	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board Policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grant Writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading Change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delegation and Follow-Through	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix B: Survey Solicitation Email

Dear Superintendent,

This survey is being sent as a courtesy to Amy Denneson in support of her doctoral work at St. Cloud State University. We encourage you to participate in this survey. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and the survey will be open for two weeks. The research results will be shared with MASA members.

You have been invited to participate in this survey because you are a woman serving as a superintendent of schools in Minnesota. You are one of only 53 women currently serving in this capacity; therefore your participation is critical for this research and will be greatly appreciated. This survey has been designed to gather information about your experiences with and perceptions of mentoring for women superintendents and will be used to inform future mentoring practices. Though existing research has established the importance of mentoring, little data has been collected about the mentoring practices that women superintendents find most effective.

Please follow this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CY9NY39>

Please participate by March 1, 2016.

I sincerely appreciate your time and assistance in helping me collect this important data.

Thank you,

Amy Denneson, Principal

Rockford Middle School - Center for Environmental Studies Doctoral
Candidate St. Cloud State University

Amy Denneson

Principal

Rockford Middle School - Center for Environmental Studies




6051 Ash Street, Rockford, MN 55373

763-477-5831 ext:2002 Fax: 763-477-5832

dennesona@rockford.k12.mn.us

www.rockford.k12.mn.us

Appendix C: IRB Approval

Institutional Review Board (IRB)		
		
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY.		
Administrative Services 210 Website: stcloudstate.edu/osp Email: osp@stcloudstate.edu Phone: 320-308-4932		
Name: Amy Denneson		IRB PROTOCOL DETERMINATION: Expedited Review-1
Address: 4170 Maplehurst Dr. Rockford, MN 55373 USA		
Email: deam0901@stcloudstate.edu		
Project Title: Women Superintendents in Minnesota: Exploring their Experiences with and Perceptions of Effective Mentoring		
Advisor: John Eller		
The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: APPROVED		
Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.- Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.		
Good luck on your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 320-308-4932 or email lidonnay@stcloudstate.edu . Use the SCSU IRB number listed on any forms submitted which relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the IRB.		
Institutional Review Board:		St. Cloud State University:
		
Linda Donnay IRB Administrator Office of Research and Sponsored Programs		Marilyn Hart Interim Associate Provost for Research Dean of Graduate Studies
OFFICE USE ONLY		
SCSU IRB# 1540 - 1916	Type: Expedited Review-1	Today's Date: 1/19/2016
1st Year Approval Date: 1/19/2016	2nd Year Approval Date:	3rd Year Approval Date:
1st Year Expiration Date: 1/18/2017	2nd Year Expiration Date:	3rd Year Expiration Date:

Appendix D: MASA Solicitation Approval

From: Mia Urick <urickm@mnasa.org>

Subject: Support Email

Date: December 10, 2015 at 10:24:50 AM CST

To: Amy Denneson <dennesona@rockford.k12.mn.us>

To Whom It May Concern:

This email confirms that the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) will cooperate with Amy Denneson in identifying and recruiting participants to complete the survey instrument she is employing to generate data for her dissertation, research that is part of her doctoral work at St. Cloud State University.

Mia Urick

Professional Development Director

MASA, MASE, and CLM

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